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AIADMK GOES ON SPRING CLEANING DRIVE, TELLS OFFICE BEARERS NOT TO TAKE BRIBES | 5



# BACK FROM THE BRINK

## Decade-Long Battle By NGOs, Greens To Revive City Lakes

Komal.Gautham@timesgroup.com

In 2007, Singanallur lake was not just a hotspot for illegal dumping of construction debris but a den of anti-social activities. People would drink and smoke on the tank bunds and dead bodies were found floating on the lake's water surface. This was the case with other lakes in the city as well.

A decade later, these lakes in the city have seemingly been transformed and revived after the 'no let-up' fight put up by various NGOs and environmentalists for the common cause.

These volunteers have not just taken up lake conservation measures but have created awareness that it had turned into people's movement. Every Sunday, a group of volunteers can be seen cleaning or planting saplings on various lake bunds.

The journey though looks all delightful it was not easy. Getting permissions and creating awareness among residents was difficult. "Despite creating awareness, the residents in and around the lakes continued to dump garbage on the tank bunds. So we set up check posts and even appointed security guards to stop it," said Vinny R Peter of Centre for Urban biodiversity conservation and education (CUBE), a non-profit organisation. Some had to even fight it out with the politicians. "We got a lot of threats

when we constantly pushed for the removal of encroachments on the Vellalore channel but it was all worth it as we know that the lake will finally get water after a decade," said Manikandan.

Slowly, it has turned into a movement as a group of residents in Chinnavedampatti area took a vow to revive the lake in October, 2017. One of the residents who did not want to be named said it all began when the bore wells in their area went bone dry. They have already cleaned 5km long channel all by themselves and have another 2km to complete. "Water flowed into the lake five years ago. We are confident that we can make it happen again and have taken all possible measures for it," said a volunteer.

Sanjay Prasad and Arun Krishnamurthy of Environmentalist Foundation of India, said, "We have no idea when it turned into a movement and now, we have cleaned nearly four lakes and undertake various other activities to sensitize people living around the lake," said Sanjay. Similarly, Deepam Swaminathan started the Kurichi Kulam Paathugaapu Iyakkam to save Kurichi lake.

To mark to the 'World Wetlands Day' on Friday, these volunteers along with school and college students organized rallies, cycle rally, lectures and speeches on the need to conserve the wetland. While a group of students of AJK College of Arts and Science took out a rally, an army of corporation school students and private college students undertook a cycle rally on Trichy Road. While some gathered at Ukkadam Lake for training on bird watching, a few gathered to plant saplings at Singanallur lake. Lectures and speeches on the need to conserve wetland was hot topic at universities and colleges in the city.



NEW LEASE OF LIFE: A view of the Vedapatti tank in the city. (Right) Singanallur lake in 2007. (Bottom) Volunteers at work to clean the Selva Chinthamani Lake

## LAKES IN DISTRICT

Total water-spread area of the tanks fed by Noyyal river  
**12.06sqkm**

Total number of tanks fed by Noyyal river

**24**

Total number of non-system (fed by rainwater and other streams) tanks

### DOS

> The bund vegetation should not be removed

> While de-silting, the natural terrain should be maintained

> Plant only native species and only on the outer edges of the bund

> Ensure sluice gates are not left abandoned

> Channels are cleared

> Community around the lake should be sensitized and involved

in the process

> Sustainable solutions should be implemented

> Regular monitoring

> Studies can be carried and made into a place for people to merge with nature in urban landscape

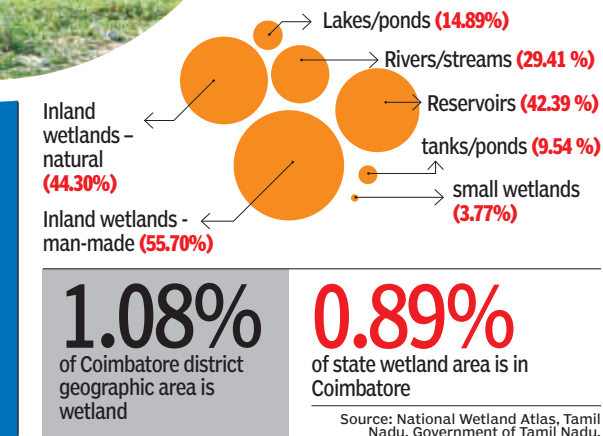
> Wetlands can be used for educating children. Butterfly cycle can be taught practically

### DON'TS

> Don't dump garbage as it is a priced land and not a wasteland

> Don't allow encroachments

> Dumping of debris



## Environmentalists seek change in govt policy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Environmentalists have sought a change in government policy to save the wetlands in urban areas and called for a need to create buffer zones around them. "We cannot keep cleaning them every weekend forever. There needs to be a policy and it needs to be implemented. Only then the lake conservation can be a sustained effort," said a city-based scientist.

V S Vijayan, former director and founder of Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, said that the government had to come up with a strong policy to ensure that illegal activities around the lakes stopped. "A buffer zone should be created and rules need to be framed on what sort of activities will be allowed. Minimum of 500 feet is required but the government should increase the area of this zone," he said.

He had recently submitted a report to the city corporation commissioner urging the government to ensure farmers around the lake undertake only organic farming and avoid the use of pesticides. "The fishermen community should be involved and rules should be framed for them. Residents should not be allowed to pollute the lake in the buffer zone and strict action should be taken against violators," he said.

Talking about sewage entering into the lake, city-based environmentalists said that it was a national problem. Sewage treatment plants and big infrastructural projects was the need of the hour. "People need to realize that lakes are not dumping sites but are the last resort to save urban biodiversity," said Joseph Reginald.

Environmentalists said unless policy level changes are made, their efforts will not reap benefits. "Most times, we clean a place and

then find it stinking with garbage again. Unless, the government takes it up and enforces laws it becomes difficult to sustain our efforts," said a volunteer.

District forest officer N Satheesh said with 50% of the world population living in urban areas, wetlands are an important aspect of sustainable future. "We should protect them as they are the shock absorbers whenever calamity strikes us," said Satheesh.

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## CITY DIGEST

### Body of missing student found

Decomposed body of a 21-year-old college student was found in a sump at his residence at Sridevi Nagar in Ganapathy here on Friday. The deceased was identified as V Bharathkumar, final year BE (electrical and electronics) student of a private college. Police suspect it to be a case of suicide as his parents were against his love affair with a girl from Attur in Salem. Bharathkumar had secured placement in a campus interview last week. On January 30, he left for college but did not return home. His parents lodged a complaint with the Saravanampatti police, who registered a man missing case. On Friday morning, his parents found the decomposed body of their son when they opened the sump after an odour emanated from it. Immediately, locals alerted the Saravanampatti police, who sent the body to the Coimbatore Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) for postmortem. Further investigation is on.

### Jallikattu panel to summon actors

The jallikattu inquiry commission on Friday unveiled the plans to summon music composer cum actor Hiphop Tamizha Adhi and Karthikeya Sivaseenapathy, managing trustee of Senaapathy Kangayam Cattle Research Foundation, to appear before it. The duo led the protests in many places, demanding the Union government to bring in a permanent law for jallikattu. "Adhi and Karthikeya Sivaseenapathy will be summoned for a hearing soon," retired Madras high court judge S Rajeswaran, the single member commission, said. The commission had sent summons to as many as 50 people to appear before it, but only 35 have turned up so far. The commission will conduct the next phase of inquiry in Madurai.

## Wild elephant herd sends residents of Coonoor panicking

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Udhagamandalam:** A team comprising forest department officials and about 40 labourers chased a wild elephant herd that strayed into the Coonoor town back into the forest on Friday.

"The herd, which comprised of six adults and a calf, was attracted to the vegetable crops cultivated in the area," assistant conservator of forest Saravanakumar said.

rests Saravanakumar said.

The herd had been roaming near Runnymede and Nanjappa Chattram on the Coonoor-Mettupalayam Road for the last six days. It reached the forest area near the bus stand on Tuesday. Due to the presence of the wild animals, forest department had advised local residents not to venture out late in the evening.

The team burst crackers and beat drums to chase the



Shantha Thiagarajan

**CHASED AWAY:** Forest department officials, along with a group of labourers, chased the wild elephants into the forest on Friday by bursting firecrackers

### The herd had been roaming near Runnymede and Nanjappa Chattram for the past six days

herd deep into the forest. "We don't think they would return. They are attracted to the vegetable crops in that area. We are working round-the-clock to monitor the movement of the herd," Saravanakumar added.

## Nursing students, one faculty suffer food poisoning

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Tirupur:** Eight students and a teaching faculty of a private nursing college, who had come for training at Tirupur government hospital, fell ill due to food poisoning on Friday.

When the faculty in-charge tried to take them back to their institute in a hurry without providing them medical help, police intervened and admitted them to the government hospital itself.

According to police, BSc nursing students of a private nursing college at Dharapuram used to come to the Tirupur government hospital for training often. After breakfast on

Friday, around 50 girl students of the college as usual came to the government in a bus. As soon as they arrived at the hospital, eight students and a teaching faculty started to vomit.

"When they tried to take treatment at the government hospital, the faculty in-charge attempted to take them back fearing the college's name was at stake," the police said.

The police, however, made it sure that all the nine were given treatment at the government hospital. "Food poisoning was found to be the cause," they said.

The students and the faculty member were discharged later.

## Cash prizes awarded to meritorious kids of police personnel

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Tirupur:** City police commissioner P Nagarajan on Friday felicitated the children of police personnel, who secured top marks in the last year's Class X and class XII exams.

The CoP gave cash prizes of ₹6,500 to P Bharath, son of sub-inspector KP Palanisamy and AS Arivanandham, son of SI M Sasikala for scoring the top rank among the children of the local police personnel in Class X exams. K Surya, daughter of head constable R Kaliappan and S Keerthana, daughter of special SI Shanmugasundaram received ₹4,500 and

**Students who secured top marks in the last year's Class X and class XII exams were felicitated**

₹2,500 for securing second and third ranks respectively. Consolation prizes of ₹2,000 were given to six other achievers.

P Anshal Apsara, daughter of SI A Prabhakar and S Abinaya of HCN Senthil Kumar were awarded ₹7,500 and ₹5,500 for securing top two ranks in class XII board exams.

The cash prizes were given from the Tamil Nadu Police Benevolent Fund.

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## Walkie-talkie 'scam': High court quashes plea

**Chennai:** The Madras high court on Friday dismissed a PIL seeking action against Tamil Nadu DGP T K Rajendran under the Prevention of Corruption Act in connection with the alleged walkie-talkie scam.

"We are unable to appreciate as to how a social worker who claims to be a postgraduate in history with no technical education

can make opinion on which kind of walkie-talkies are easier to operate and the price paid by the government for procuring such gadgets are fair or not. Significantly, there is no reference to any other comparative price. It is, however, not understood what public interest people can have in such matters," the first bench of Chief Justice Indira Banerjee

and Justice Abdul Quddus said.

The petitioner submitted that as per the scheme, 10,000 walkie-talkies had to be purchased at an allotted amount of ₹47.56 crores for 2017-18. But the tender was sanctioned in favour of Motorola Solutions India Private Limited which quoted ₹83.45 crore that too for only 4,000 handsets. **TNN**

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*The 375-odd member Coimbatore Humour Society believes that humour can help one get out of sticky situations in life*

## LAUGH YOUR BLUES AWAY

Komal.Gautham@timesgroup.com

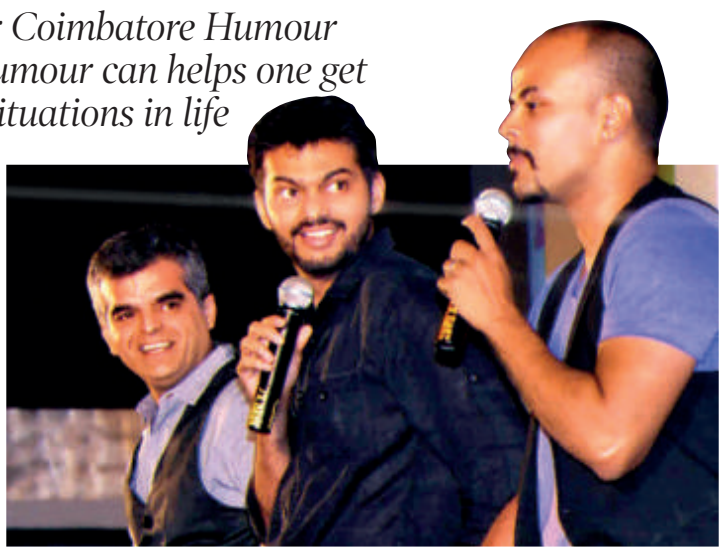
**W**hat does a doctor do when a 78-year-old man who is affected by Alzheimer's disease comes to him and excitedly invites him for his wedding with a yesteryear actress. Dr G Lakshmiopathi, president of the Coimbatore Humour Society, was not sure whether he should convince the patient of the reality. Looking at his quarrelsome and ever-complaining wife, the decision became even tougher, he narrates. The audience burst into laughter as the doctor pauses, ready to recount another such episode at the meeting attended by more than 150 members.

The trust, formed in 1969 by the doctor, had only one aim which was to ensure that people in the city, who were very serious, developed a sense of humour and enjoyed the lighter side of life. "We all share a common passion for humour and love a good laugh," he said explaining how the trust was formed. The doctor says he always

had a soft corner for humour as he lived in a joint family. "We would often poke fun at each other and at the guests who overstayed to become permanent guests. When I became a doctor, the passion only increased as I was surrounded by people who were suffering from ill-health. I would often make the patients laugh to ensure they are calmer and happier and try to see the lighter side of the disease," he said.

The members have been meeting regularly once every month since then. "Starting from the invitations to the welcome address, we ensure everything is out of the usual and funny," said Sathish Santanam, secretary of the trust.

A stand-up comedian is invited every month to perform as the 50-



**FUNNY BONE:** The club members ensure that the humour is from real-life incidents

### SOME OF THE PAST PERFORMERS AT LAUGHATHON

**Cyrus Brocha | Anuvab Pal | Saurabh Pant | Anu Menon | Vir Das | Chinni Jayanth**

**NAME OF THE GROUP: Coimbatore Humour Society Trust**

**Total Members: 375**

**Annual Event: Laughathon**

**They meet once every month and invite stand-up comedians from across the country to perform**

**Started in 1969 and revived in 1992**

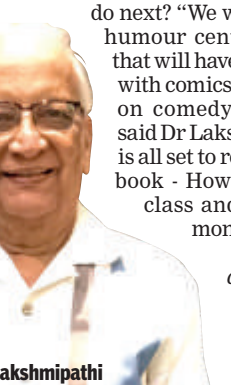


odd members form a happy audience ready for their funny bones to be tickled. "These meetings are such stress busters and are my favourite. Though I joined just four years ago, I feel like it's a family as we go on picnics together and have a lot of fun," said Urmila Surana.

Satish said humour is so important in life that sometimes it helps us get out of absurd and very emotional situations in life. "Once my business faced a crisis. But thanks to the club, I was able to see the funny side of it had a soft corner for humour as he lived in a joint family. "We would often poke fun at each other and at the guests who overstayed to become permanent guests. When I became a doctor, the passion only increased as I was surrounded by people who were suffering from ill-health. I would often make the patients laugh to ensure they are calmer and happier and try to see the lighter side of the disease," he said.

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Dr G Lakshmiopathi

and overcame the problem with a laugh. Life is all about perceptions and humour teaches us that. It is very important to enjoy a good laugh," said Sathish.

The members love humour but know the difference between insult and comedy. "We ensure that there are no below-the-belt jokes and many comedians refuse to come because of that. But we ensure that not a single abusive word is uttered and the humour is pure from life observations and incidents. Many big names have come to our club and performed. Some

have become big names after performing here and have their own separate shows now," said Mohan Shankar, vice-president of the club. The trust has been organising an yearly event - laughathon - in which top stand-up comedians from across the country come and perform. With a membership of nearly 375, the trust has stopped taking new members unless older members leave. They also release a journal on humour with jokes and cartoons that is circulated among the members.

So, what does the trust plan to do next? "We want to set up a humour centre in the city that will have a huge library with comics CDs and books on comedy stacked up," said Dr Lakshmiopathi, who is all set to release his sixth book - How to be middle-class and happy - next month.

*Readers can contact the club on this ID: **humoursocietycb@gmail.com***

## ₹2.5L seized from Tasmac office in Salem

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Salem:** Following a surprise raid, sleuths of the directorate of vigilance and anti-corruption (DVAC) seized unaccounted cash worth ₹2.5 lakh from the Tasmac District Manager's Office here on Friday.

A team led by S Chandramouli had rushed to the office situated at Sandhiyur area near Mallur after receiving a tip-off. "As many as 256 Tasmac outlets and more than 200 bars are functioning in the district. According to the information we received, supervisors and salesmen at these outlets were forced to pay ₹10,000 to ₹30,000 as bribe to the officials at the district manager's office. The officials used to receive as much as ₹30 lakh as bribe every month," Chandramouli said.

DVAC officials have initiated an inquiry against Tasmac the Tasmac district manager Deivanayaki about the ₹2.5 lakh unaccounted money recovered from the office. "We will initiate action against corrupt officials after our inquiry," the official added.

## Salem GH gets ready for organ transplantation

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Salem:** The government has taken steps to facilitate organ transplantation surgeries in Salem Super Specialty Hospital, said Dr J Radhakrishnan, state health secretary. "Kidney transplantation surgery will be started within 60 days," he said. Radhakrishnan was in the city on Friday to inspect activities of health department in the district.

Talking to reporters, Radhakrishnan said the state government had been working to fill the vacancies of 300 doctors and also nurses across the state.

The state, he said, was placed first in organ transplantation and related surgeries in the country.

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# No move to make Tamil court language: Centre

**Sivakumar.B**  
@timesgroup.com

**Chennai:** With the Supreme Court declining to accept Tamil as a language in the courts, the Centre on Friday stated that due to the decision of the top court, no further action has been taken in the matter. Supreme Court had shot down the proposal of the Tamil Nadu government for the same in 2006.

The issue of Tamil as court language was raised during question hour by AIADMK MP Sasikala Pushpa on Friday. “Whether government is aware of the fact that a resolution was passed in the Tamil Nadu assembly in 2006 urging the Central government to get Presidential assent to make Tamil as official language in high court,” said Pushpa.

In reply to the question, Union minister of state for law, justice and corporate affairs P P Chaudhary said the SC had rejected the proposal not once but thrice. “Government of India had received a proposal from the state government in 2006 requesting permission to use Tamil language in the proceedings of the Madras high court,” said Chaudhary.

The minister said the proposal was referred to the Chief Justice for advice and the CJ in his letter dated October 16, 2012, said that the Supreme Court after due deliberations decided on October 11, 2012, not to accept the proposal. “The Supreme Court had adopted similar resolutions earlier on May 7, 1995, and October 15, 1999. In view of the top court’s no further action has been taken in the matter,” said Chaudhary.

The issue of arguing in Tamil in high court has been an emotive issue with almost all main political parties in the state have been seeking the Centre to make Tamil HC language. There have been virulent protests by lawyers in Madurai seeking Tamil as the language.

“What the Centre has said is old news. Soon after it was rejected once again by the Supreme Court in 2015, Amma (Jayalalithaa) gave a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue. After her death, both O Panneerselvam and Edappadi K Palaniswami have represented the demand for making Tamil as HC language. Soon it will once again be placed before SC for consideration,” said state law minister C Ve Shanmugam.

“The steps to make Tamil as the language in HC was taken by DMK governments when ever it was in power. We did our best as per the Constitution and after consulting our party’s legal team and working president M K Stalin, we will take it up once again,” said DMK spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP T K S Elangovan.

# Inquest into death of AIADMK cadre

**Vellore:** Magistrate of the judicial fast track court, Vellore, R Kangaraj, on Friday conducted an inquest into the death of a 41-year-old AIADMK cadre, who was arrested and remanded in the Vellore Central Prison for Men for assaulting and abusing Kalasapakkam MLA V Panneerselvam.

After the magistrate conducted the inquest, the family members of Vasanthamani, a native of Polur town, received his body at 6pm on Friday.

The postmortem was performed after obtaining a letter from his wife Sunitha. The doctors performed a surgery on him on January 26 to remove a clot in his brain. He, however, slipped into coma and was kept in the ICU. TNN

# AIADMK goes on spring cleaning drive

## Tells Office Bearers Not To Give Money To Party Cadres Who Want Government Jobs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Chennai:** The crucial meet of chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and deputy chief minister O Panneerselvam with AIADMK functionaries at the party headquarters on Friday took serious note of allegations that district secretaries and other office bearers were forcing partymen to cough up money to land government jobs, especially as noon meal workers, said highly placed sources in the party.

The two-hour long discussion mostly veered around the new membership drive underway in the party.



**The crucial meet of CM K Palaniswami and deputy CM O Panneerselvam with AIADMK functionaries mostly veered around the new membership drive underway in the party. The party has set a target of enrolling 1.5 crore members**

The party has set a target of enrolling 1.5 crore members. “Those who attended the meeting raised concerns about partymen being forced to pay bribe for securing lower-level government jobs. The leadership took serious note of the charge and said such practices would be only bad name to the government, because after all, noon meal workers are given very low salary. It was also resolved to fill up such vacancies with AIADMK cadres and their family members. Office bearers

have been told to treat party card holders with dignity,” said a senior leader who attended the meeting.

The party membership drive began on January 29. Going by the party bylaw, organizational election has to be held every five years. Elections in the AIADMK are due next year and the senior leaders are a worried lot after rebel leader T T V Dhinakaran’s resounding victory in R K Nagar byelection.

His influence has been increasing in the party in recent weeks. Continuing expulsion of party office bearers is testimony for that. Friday’s meeting, surprisingly did not see heated exchanges between the two groups led by EPS and OPS. Nevertheless, many leaders like V Maitreyan, Natham Viswanathan, PH Pandian and Manoj Pandian in the OPS camp seem to have expressed their displeasure over not being invited for such crucial meetings of senior leaders. “They were not invited because they are not party office bearers at present,” said a senior leader.

Sources said the party has decided to form permanent booth-level committees for better coordination and management, especially keeping elections in mind.

Elections for local bodies and cooperative societies are round the corner. “We lost the R K Nagar bypoll due to lack of organised party machinery at the grassroots level. Booth-level functionaries will help oversee the party affairs much better. They will also interact closely with voters,” another leader said.

Anticipating early elections for the Lok Sabha, the party functionaries were told to gear up for the same. All the functionary slots rendered vacant because of expulsion of Dhinakaran supporters would be filled up shortly, said the leader.



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# Water-starved TN to build 20K check dams in rural areas

## Structures Will Come At A Cost Of ₹250 Cr

Julie.Mariappan  
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**Chennai:** Having learned lessons from poor monsoons and bitter legal battles with neighbours in inter-state river disputes, water-starved TN has embarked on a massive mission to build 20,000 check dams, boulder dams, and gabion structures across gullies/channels in rural areas to impede the flow of surface water and retain it for a longer duration.

If everything goes well, the structures will be in place soon. While concrete dams will be put in place in plain areas, boulders will be used in hilly/slope areas, and gabion structures (small stone and wire dams) in steeper slopes.

The rural development department has taken up the construction of 2,000 cement concrete check dams, 9,300 boulder dams and 8,700 gabion structures based on the guidelines issued by the Centre under MGNREGA, and proper GIS

**How check dam helps?** A check dam is a barrier across a channel or stream to collect water. The storage improves soil moisture of the adjoining areas and land fertility, allows percolation to recharge the aquifers

**Three check dam types:** Concrete check dams are built in plain areas; Boulder check dams in hilly/slope areas; and Gabion structures used on steeper slopes

**Crop coverage:** Of the total area of 37.97 lakh hectares covered until January 17, paddy is cultivated in an area of 16.69 lakh hectares (44%), millets in 8.62



lakh hectares (21%), pulses in 6.3 lakh hectares (17%), cotton in 1.74 lakh hectares (5%), sugarcane in 1.39 lakh hectares (4%) and oilseeds in 3.21 lakh hectares (8%)

**Main water sources:** The state has 34 rivers and there are 89 dams with a storage capacity of 238.58 tmcft (thousand million cubic feet), besides 39,202 tanks

tagging done for durable assets. "We changed the strategy from storing surface water to recharging the groundwater table by constructing check dams of three types, based on a pilot study in Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts," rural development additional director Muthu Meenal said. Some 356 check dams were built in select villages of Kanniyambadi block in Vellore, 900 boulder and gabion structures in Tiruvannamalai, and they found the recent spell of rain increasing the storage in agriculture wells.

The scheme comes at a

cost of Rs 250 crore, with Centre and the state sharing the component in the ratio of 75:25.

The state is largely dependent on the two monsoons for storing and recharging its water resources. Their failure led to severe water scarcity and drought-like situation last year. Other than Vellore and Tiruvannamalai, the worst-affected districts will get more check dams – Salem (980), Villupuram (950), Dindigul (835), Tirunelveli (780) and Ramanthapuram (770). Plans are afoot to enhance the check dams under MGNREGA to 40,000 next

year and build 2 lakh structures by the end of fourth year. The agriculture department last week found that in five revenue blocks in Nagapattinam and seven blocks each in Thanjavur and Trichy, standing samba crop faced risk due to lack of water bodies.

Considering the importance of rainwater conservation and groundwater recharge, it is the right time to look upon means to utilise a part of the surplus surface runoff flowing down to the sea through construction of check dams, rural development secretary Hans Raj Verma said.

## HC calls for all files as govt picks new DME

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Madurai:** The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Friday raised questions over the government's proposed appointment of Edwin Joe as director of medical education (DME) and called for all files relating to the appointments of DMEs since 2014.

The court's observations came on a contempt case filed by the dean-cum-special officer of Karur Government Medical College, S Revathy, who has been fighting for her right to the promotional post of DME for two years. The additional advocate general told the division bench of Justices N Kirubakaran and R Tharani that the state's health and family welfare department had prepared a panel of names for the appointment of the new DME, from which it had chosen Edwin Joe.

The post of DME had fallen vacant on December 28, 2015, after the then DME S Geethalakshmi became vice-chancellor of TN Dr MGR Medical University. As per the norms framed by the government, Revathy should have been appointed as DME. **TNN**

# Public offices biggest tax evaders in Madurai

## Top 100 Owe Corpn ₹48 Cr

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Madurai:** The city corporation on Friday made public the names of the top 100 property tax defaulters within its limits who cumulatively owed it a whopping ₹47.64 crore. Curiously enough, it later 'updated' the list in which the names of the top 38 defaulters were seen removed.

The disclosure was made as per Proactive Disclosure under Section 4(1) (b) of RTI Act, 2005. The defaulters include 22 public sector offices and leading private educational institutes. The list (available on the link [www.maduracorporation.co.in/DefaultersList.aspx](http://www.maduracorporation.co.in/DefaultersList.aspx)) was released on December 15, 2017, but had failed to evoke any response from the defaulters.

RTI activist and founder of Peoples Awareness Trust (for RTI awareness) K Hakim hailed the corporation's move to disclose the list of defaulters. However, he said that even after a month



Among the prominent defaulters were public sector offices, which had been evading taxes for years. In fact, some of them had not paid their dues for over 42 years, since the corporation came into being

elapsed since the list was published, it remained unchanged on February 2. This showed that the disclosure had in no way forced the defaulters to pay their dues. Among the prominent defaulters were public sector offices, which had been evading taxes for years together. In fact, some of them had not paid their dues for over 42 years, almost since the corporation came into being.

The second largest municipal body in the state, Madurai city became a municipality as per the Town Improvement Act of 1865 and was upgraded into a corporation on May 1, 1971. It was expanded from the earlier 72 wards to 100 wards in September 2010. The total tax dues from the first ten defaulters on the list added up to ₹17.70 crore most of which

says that the court had recently asked the Madurai corporation as to why it should not hike taxes to meet its financial requirements. "This made me think of sending a speed post on tax evasion in the city and I am extremely happy that the court has now ordered the sealing of defaulting premises," he said.

The list which was published on December 15, 2017 stated that the district collector had to pay tax to the tune of ₹28 lakh from 2016 while the district court has dues worth ₹19.87 lakh. Various PWD offices have been defaulting for over 20 years to the tune of crores of rupees. Interestingly, the corporation updated its previous list on Friday in which the first 38 defaulters of the December 15 list were removed.

## CM launches housing projects

**Chennai:** Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Friday inaugurated a slew of programmes in housing, highways and education de-

partments, including 1,500 tenements in Vysarpadi and Tondiarpet in Chennai, and Poonga Nagar in Madurai at an estimated 156.21 crore. The

tenements were opened through video conferencing from Secretariat.

The seven-storey Vysarpadi scheme gets ten blocks and each dwelling unit has been built in an area of 416sq ft, said an official release. **TNN**

# Conduct of three cops needs to be condemned: SP

►From P 1

Meanwhile, the police team stopped another motorist and allegedly extracted Rs 1,500 from him for violating traffic rules. The SSI allegedly threatened to remand another motorist for hesitating to pay money. Interestingly, all these developments were videographed by another motorist without the knowledge of the police team. The video went viral on WhatsApp in no time.

Villupuram superintendent of police S Jayakumar said the three policemen were transferred to the armed reserve wing as soon as the incident came to the knowledge of the senior officials. "They were subsequently suspended and a departmental inquiry is underway. We have been repeatedly advising policemen on duty to behave in a polite and civilised manner in public.

The team did not overcharge (no money was collected without giving due receipt) any motorist for traffic violations. But the manner in which they conducted themselves while discharging the duty needs to be condemned. They assaulted them and used unparliamentary words. They will pay the price," said Jayakumar.

"We have told police officials not to overreact when they notice people taking videos of police discharging their duty. Instead, such people should be booked under appropriate sections for obstructing public servants from discharging their duties," he said.

A call taxi driver, R Manikandan, committed suicide after he was assaulted by a policeman for taking videos of police checking motorists in Chennai on January 21. The cop had collected a penalty of Rs 100 from him for not fastening seat belt.

# High court transfers defence examination cheating case to CBI

Saravanan.II@timesgroup.com

**Madurai:** The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Friday ordered transfer of a case - relating to impersonation in an examination conducted by Indian Ordnance Factory -- from the KK Nagar police in Trichy to the CBI.

Defence ministry's Indian Ordnance Factory conducted the written examination in 2015 at Jamal Mohamed College in Trichy to recruit people for various posts.

However, the recruitment agency doubted that there were impersonations in the examination. This led to testing a batch of 11 applications along with fingerprints of concerned candidates. Later, it was found that the fingerprints of two candidates did not match.

Following this, general manager of the factory, Dr C Ariyasakthi lodged a com-

**Defence ministry's Indian Ordnance Factory conducted the written examination in 2015 at Jamal Mohamed College in Trichy to recruit people for various posts**

plaint with the K K Nagar police who in turn registered a case and started investigations. The police arrested Repeh Shibud Dey of Nagpur in Maharashtra and K Bharat Singh of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh in 2016.

Alleging there was no further development in the case, the general manager filed a petition before the high court bench seeking to transfer the investigation to the CBI.

When the case had come up before Justice PN Prakash recently, the judge had

sought the appearances of superintendent of police of Anti-Corruption Bureau of CBI (Chennai). Accordingly, the superintendent of police Syed Bazzullah and CBI inspector G A Suryakumar appeared before the court on Friday, when the case came up for hearing.

The inspector of K K Nagar police station told the court that arrested are on bail. After hearing, the judge said, "Prima facie, it appears that a scam has occurred. The perusal of case diary of the police shows they are looking out for six people who are said to be living in other states. It will be difficult for the local police to nab the accused. Since the CBI is a fit agency, the case is directed to be transferred to CBI, anti-corruption Bureau, Chennai. The KK Nagar police after obtaining order from Trichy city police commissioner has to hand over all relevant materials to the CBI."

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## SC Constitution bench to decide on pleas seeking jallikattu ban

### Bull-taming Sport Can Continue Till Apex Court's Verdict

AmitAnand.Choudhary @timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** Is bull-taming sport of jallikattu an essential part of Tamil Nadu's culture which cannot be banned by courts or does it perpetuate cruelty to animals?

The Supreme Court on Friday referred these questions to a five-judge Constitution bench to examine and adjudicate.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justice Rohinton F. Nariman said substantial questions relating to interpretation of the Constitution were involved in the case and it should be decided by a larger bench which would take a call on the constitutional validity of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act, which was passed in January last year by the state legislature to overcome the SC's 2014 verdict banning jallikattu.

The court framed five questions which are to be decided by the Constitution bench. As there is no stay on the operation of the law



**CHALLENGING NEW LAW:** Animal rights organisations contended that the apex court had ruled that a custom or usage could not be allowed if it was found to be violative of law

passed by the state legislature, the bull-taming sport could continue in the state till final adjudication of the case.

Amid protests across the state for lifting of ban over jallikattu, the state assembly had unanimously passed an amendment bill in January 2017, allowing jallikattu on the ground that it was vital to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the state.

Challenging the new law, animal rights organisations contended that the apex court

had ruled that a custom or usage could not be allowed if it was found to be violative of law.

They said that animals' right to dignity and freedom from unnecessary pain and suffering was protected under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and it could not be frustrated by the state by framing new rule.

They contended that the law was passed by state assembly to override the verdict of the apex court which had declared the bull-taming sport as "illegal". They alleged that jallikattu was a blood sport in which bulls were subjected to various types of cruelty.

The Centre and Tamil Nadu government, however, contended that jallikattu is part and parcel of Tamil Nadu's culture and it could not be banned.

The apex court had earlier dismissed the Tamil Nadu government's plea seeking a review of the 2014 judgement banning the use of bulls for jallikattu events in the state and bullock cart races across the country.

**Questions on jallikattu referred to Constitution bench:**

■ Does the law further and perpetuate cruelty to animals? Is it colourable legislation which does not relate to any Entry in the State List or Entry 17 of the Concurrent List?

■ The Act states that it is to preserve the cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu. Can the impugned Act be stated to be part of the cultural heritage of the people of Tamil Nadu so as to receive the protection of Article 29 of the Constitution?

■ Is the Act, in pith and substance, to ensure the survival and well-being of the native breed of bulls?

■ Does the Act go contrary to Articles 51A(g) and 51A(h), and could it be said, therefore, to be unreasonable and violative of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India?

■ Is the Act directly contrary to the SC's judgment in A. Nagaraja case and whether the defects pointed out in the judgments could be said to have been overcome by the Tamil Nadu legislature by enacting the Act?

## Main accused in Kerala conversion case detained

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Muhammad Riyaz Rasheed**, husband of Pathamthitta native woman who alleged forceful conversion and an attempt to sell her to Islamic State (IS) as a sex slave was taken into custody by the National Investigation Agency at the Chennai airport on Friday morning.

The complainant is a resident of Gujarat. She had alleged that accused Muhammad Riyaz Rasheed had raped her and recorded her visuals in compromising positions. The man had forcibly converted her to Islam, married her by forging documents, created a fake passport and illegally kept her in confinement at Jeddah.

NIA had taken over the probe last week. Rasheed was arrested from Chennai airport when he landed there on Friday morning from Jeddah via Colombo.

## Deoband Ulemas criticise Kerala woman cleric

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Meerut:** Deoband Ulemas have joined forces with Muslim clerics of Kerala in criticising Jamia, the woman imam who created history by leading the Friday prayers on January 26, a practice usually done by male members of the community. She had also been given death threats by the Kerala clerics earlier. Now, the Deoband clerics have severely criticised Jamia for entering into forbidden territory. State president of Tanzeem Ulema-i-Hind, Maulana Nadeem-ul-Wajidi, said, "Muslims lead their lives according to the Holy Quran and Hadees and they do not need any Jamia to teach them the ways of Islam. She has no knowledge of the procedures and is doing things in a completely wrong manner." **TNN**

## UP top cop's pledge to build Ram temple caught on cam

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Lucknow:** In a fresh controversy hounding the bureaucracy in UP, director general (home guard) Surya Kumar was caught on camera taking a pledge at a public event to construct Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Kumar is the second most senior IPS officer in the state and was in the race for state police chief's post till last month. The 1982-batch IPS officer took the pledge at an event titled 'Ram mandir nirman samasya evam samadhan' at Lucknow University along with several others. The event was organised by Akhil Bharatiya Samgrha Vichar Manch some days ago.

Participants resolved to construct a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya saying, "Hum sab Ram bhakt aaf is karyakram ke dauran yeh sankalp lete hain ki jald se jald Ram mandir ka bhavya nirman ho. Jai

## Muslims opposing Ram temple should go to Pak: UP Shia Board chief

**Faizabad:** Uttar Pradesh Shia Waqf Board chairman Waseem Rizvi said on Friday that Muslims who are against a temple at Ram Janmabhoomi should go to Pakistan or Bangladesh and join the so called Islamic State. Rizvi told reporters after offering prayers at the disputed site, "Those who are opposing Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya and want to build Babri mosque at the site should go to Pakistan or Bangladesh. There is no place for fundamentalist Muslims in India." **TNN**

**Shri Ram** (We, the devotees of Ram, take a pledge at this event to construct a grand Ram temple at the earliest. Jai Shri Ram)."

In an attempt to control damage, Kumar issued a statement on Friday saying that he had been invited as a guest to the event which was aimed at finding an amicable solution to the Ram temple dispute. He added that only a partial recording from the event had been leaked in which he was caught taking the pledge. He

said the decision of the apex court on the matter would be binding.

However, Kumar's IPS fraternity was quick to criticise him on Friday. IPS Association, the official Twitter handle of Indian Police Service (Central) Association, said, "We disassociate ourselves from the act of a senior #IPS officer as shown in the video & reiterate that it is against the ethos of neutrality, fairness and uprightness that Indian Police Service stands for."

## Hyd student suicide: Class teacher, principal sent to judicial custody

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Hyderabad:** A day after a 14-year-old girl committed suicide in Malkajgiri, allegedly after being humiliated by the school management over non-payment of fees, a local court in Malkajgiri, on Friday, sent the principal, accountant and the class teacher to judicial custody.

Confirming this, L. Ramesh, sector officer, Malkajgiri police station said: "The three are lodged at the Cherlapally jail."

On February 1, the minor, a Class IX student at Jyothi High School in Malkajgiri hanged herself for allegedly being punished by the teacher who reprimanded the teenager for failing clear dues to the tune of 2,000. Turns out the student's father, an auto driver by profession, could not pay the fee as the family was undergoing financial crisis.

According to police, the girl narrated the incident to her sister, on returning home from school, and later went inside her room.

When she did not respond to her mother's calls an hour later, the family rushed inside to find her hanging. In the suicide note the teenager wrote: "They didn't allow me to write the exam. Sorry, mom."

Following her death, the Malkajgiri police took the principal, accountant and class teacher into custody and booked a case under Section 305 (Abetment of suicide of child or insane person) of the Indian Penal Code and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (prevention of atrocities) Act.

Apart from the police, the district education officer (Medchal) initiated an independent enquiry in the case. During the preliminary investigation, the school management claimed that the student was sent home as she complained of stomach pain. "Based on the suicide note, we suspect that the school was indeed responsible for humiliating and pushing the student to take the extreme step," said R. Rohini, in-charge DDO of Medchal.

## Kin of minor girls in jail for cow slaughter seek HC aid

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**Muzaffarnagar:** More than a month after Uttar Pradesh police arrested and sent to jail two girls aged 12 and 16 on charges of cow slaughter in Khatauli area of Muzaffarnagar district, the minors continue to languish in prison.

"Their bail plea was rejected by a lower court. The grandfather of the girls, Haji Nasir, has now approached high court seeking bail, and a hearing on it is due," said Haji Ezaj,

a local corporator, talking to **TOI** on Friday.

The girls, along with their

### BAIL PLEA REJECTED

family members had received bail on charges of attempt to murder, but they are still in jail on charges of cattle slaughter.

Nine people, including their mother, were arrested on December 29 for alleged slaughter of cows. The main

accused, Naseemuddin Qureshi, the girls' father, is still at large. Police had also claimed to have seized 10 quintals of meat from their possession.

The two girls were shown as adults in court and sent to Muzaffarnagar district jail instead of being taken to a juvenile home. Politics had heated up following the arrests, with several parties condemning the imprisonment of the minors. Local residents had also gathered in large numbers and protested the arrests.

Muzaffarnagar police had earlier admitted that they did not furnish Aadhaar card details of the minors in court as proof to verify their ages.

A week after the arrest, officers said they had "guessed" that the girls were adults by their "physical appearance".

But witnesses that **TOI** met who had attended the wedding of Naseemuddin and Shehzadi in Jasola village here in Khatauli in 2001 confirmed that the girls were minors.

## Mumbai hosp MRI accident: Radiologist held

**Mumbai:** A radiologist of the Nair hospital was arrested in connection with the death of a man in a freak Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine accident at the facility on January 27, police said on Friday. Agripada police said Dr Siddhant Shah was arrested on Thursday after the family of the 32-year-old victim, Rajesh Maru, told them that the radiologist was also present when the accident occurred.

Shah was charged with dereliction of duty, police said, adding he was released on bail. Shah's was the fourth arrest in the case. Earlier, police had arrested three hospital staffers: Dr Saurabh Lanjekar, ward boy Vitthal Chavan and attendant Sunita Surve for negligence causing death.

Maru had accompanied a relative to the hospital for an MRI examination. When he entered the room carrying an oxygen cylinder, the strong magnetic field got activated, pulling him violently towards the machine. The cylinder burst on impact and he died after inhaling the gas in excess. **PTI**

## 4-yr-old chews cell charger, electrocuted

Milton.Lawrence @timesgroup.com

**Chikkamagaluru:** A carpenter in Chikkamagaluru lost his 4-year-old son Abhignan in a freak accident on Thursday evening when



the boy placed a mobile charger pin in his mouth and chewed on it when it was plugged into the power point.

Abhignan was electrocuted after the electrical current passed through the charger cable into his body. The charger was connected to the power point and it had not been switched off.

The cable was hanging from the power socket and it caught the boy's attention. He put the pin in his mouth and got a shock.

Abhignan is the only son of Indresh and Leela, who stay on Vagar Road, Aldur. Abhignan had been given a bath by his mother just minutes before the in-

cident. Standing on a chair placed close to the power socket, he managed to hold the cable and put it in his mouth. He fell unconscious. His mother was alone at home when the incident happened.

A police officer said there was no visible injury, either in the mouth or any part of his body. Doctors who conducted the autopsy told police the boy may have died of heart or liver damage.

### CHARGER WAS ON

Family sources claimed the boy didn't receive proper medical care at MG Hospital and the delay may have caused his death. The boy died en route to Chikkamagaluru hospital.

Chikkamagaluru police said this should be an eye-opener to mobile users, especially those with kids and senior citizens at home. Many users tend to leave mobile charger cables switched on and this could prove dangerous.

## Gunmen flee with ₹69 lakh in J'khand robbery

**Dumka:** Four armed robbers looted ₹69 lakh from the Bank of Baroda (BoB)'s Mihijam branch in Jharkhand's Jamtara town on Friday.

The masked gunmen targeted the bank, situated in one of the busiest streets of the town, around 10.30 am before it had started business for the day.

The assailants held the two staff members, including a woman, and the branch manager at gunpoint and forced them to open the bank's vault before escaping with the cash on two motorcycles. They also damaged the CCTV cameras installed. Police suspect the robbers have crossed the interstate border into West Bengal.

"All efforts to set up roadblocks to trap the robbers were in vain," said a police officer. "Instances of gross violation of security protocols have been found at the bank. The statements of the staff members also seemed to be contradictory," said Jamtara SP Jaya Roy, adding that the amount of ₹69 lakh in the branch was 10 times more than the permissible limit. **TNN**

## SC: Examining only Loya death, not Amit Shah's 'unusual' discharge

### Lawyers Say Circumstances Around Judge's Death Suspicious

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Friday rejected a determined effort by petitioners to link the allegedly suspicious death of Sohrabuddin Sheikh "fake" encounter trial judge B.H. Loya to what they called "unusual discharge" of BJP president Amit Shah from the case.

Appearing for Bombay Lawyers' Association, senior advocate Dushyant Dave told the court that trial in the Sohrabuddin "fake" encounter case was shifted to Mumbai on the SC's order in 2010 because of "involvement of police officials and particularly high officials of Gujarat". He said the SC order for trial by a single judge came to naught as the first trial judge was transferred "after obtaining from him a self-serving transfer request", the second judge (Loya) died and the third judge discharged Shah and other police officials in December 2014.



**Senior advocate Dushyant Dave told the court the trial in the Sohrabuddin "fake" encounter case was shifted to Mumbai on the SC's order in 2010 because of "involvement of police officers, particularly in Gujarat"**

Dave said the circumstances surrounding Loya's sudden death raised suspicions. He was backed by senior advocate V. Giri who appeared for another lawyers' association, Indira Jaising who appeared for an intervenor and Gunratana Sadavarte, president of Maharashtra Administrative Tribunal Bar Association, all of them also targeting Shah.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud, which heard counsels patiently and went through documents presented by the petitioners, clarified at the end of the

days' hearing. "We are only concerned with the case relating to Loya's death and not with Sohrabuddin fake encounter trial in this proceeding before us."

Dave was interrupted several times by Maharashtra government counsel Mukul Rohatgi, who accused him of selectively quoting from documents.

Rohatgi said three judicial officers had accompanied Loya to the marriage function in Nagpur and they had stayed together in a guest house.

The three judges took Loya to hospital in their car in the wee hours of December 1, 2014, when he suffered

a heart attack.

"So, here are some petitioners who after three years want the Supreme Court to investigate a matter in which three judicial officers have given affidavits saying there was no foul play and that they were all present during the treatment given to Loya. There is no complaint from Loya's family about any foul play," Rohatgi said.

Dave burst out and said, "I want to cross-examine the judges who gave such affidavits or statements that they were with Loya on December 1. I would request the Supreme Court to call the family members of Loya and interact with them. They are under tremendous pressure as was Loya while conducting trial in the Sohrabuddin case. The family members' statement that there was no foul play in Loya's death is obtained under pressure."

The arguments remained inconclusive and will resume on Monday.

## J&K avalanche: 3 soldiers dead, one injured

Saleem.Pandit@timesgroup.com

**Srinagar:** Three soldiers were killed and one injured when their Army post was buried under snow due to an avalanche in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday.

A senior army officer said that the post of 21 Rajput was buried after an avalanche hit it around 4:30 pm at Sona Pandi Gali (SPG) in Machil along the line of control.

The officer said a search operation was launched to rescue four soldiers, who were buried under the snow after the avalanche. All four were rescued but shortly after the rescue operation, one soldier died. Two others succumbed while they were being transferred to 92 base hospital Badamibagh in Srinagar. The condition of the fourth soldier is stable.

## Khattar meets students whose bus was attacked during Padmaavat protests

Rohit.David@timesgroup.com

**Gurgaon:** Chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday visited G D Goenka World School (Sohna Road) and met students and teachers who were in the school bus that was targeted by rioters protesting against the release of Padmaavat last week.

"Since the day of the incident (bus vandalism), the one thing that kept coming to my mind was the extreme courage shown by the school kids. This is the reason I wanted to meet them," the CM said. He also interacted individually with several of the students and listened intently when a teacher told him how brave the kids had been in following instructions and crouching on the floor of the bus when rioters threw stones and bottles at it and smashed



the window panes. A video showing the kids and teachers huddling on the bus floor during the rioting in Bhondsi on January 24 was shared widely on the internet and seen across the country, triggering widespread outrage. Khattar was candid enough to say "this episode should not have happened" under his watch. "We will not tolerate anyone who plays with the lives of kids. This was a shameful act. It's fine if some people oppose something, but they should put it forward in a democratic way. Whoever is responsible for this will not be spared," he told the kids and teachers. The CM's words, and the personal touch his visit provided, were comforting for those scarred by the January 24 experience. The school appreciated the

CM's initiative as a "very nice gesture".

Principal Neeta Bali said, "He was very concerned about the incident. The CM wanted to express his solidarity with the school, teachers and students. He spoke with almost every child personally and wanted to find out if they are still traumatised or not. I feel it was a very nice gesture."

A teacher who interacted with the CM said Khattar asked the youngsters to try and forget what had happened. "The CM also spoke about the courage shown by the bus driver and his presence of mind. It was very encouraging coming from someone who is in authority. He also spoke of the fact that in the coming days, he would like to acknowledge the staff, children, teachers, bus driver and conductor," the principal said.

## Chandrachud objects to 'Aadhaar judge' tag

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** Hearing on petitions challenging the validity of Aadhaar by a five-judge Supreme Court bench typified the risk judges run these days of being branded in the face of increasing pressure to agree to NGOs' line of argument and discard the government's stand.

The highly polarised arguments—petitioners' contention that Aadhaar would be a tool in government's hand to track every activity of citizens in gross violation of the fundamental right to privacy, as against the Centre's stand that UID was the greatest enabler to empower citizens—saw a judge taking umbrage to

what he perceived as a taunt from the petitioner.

Arguing before a bench of CJI Dipak Misra and Justices A.K. Sikri, A.M. Khanwilkar, D.Y. Chandrachud and Ashok Bhushan, senior advocate Shyam Divan said "Today, I am arguing before a panel of independent judges who are steeped in liberal values with a strong sense of constitutional freedom. But, 25 years later, the counsel appearing in my place will be disadvantaged unless we are successful in curbing the Aadhaar programme. Otherwise, future counsel may be appearing before Aadhaar judges whose lifelong details would have been tracked by the government before his appointment as a judge," Divan said.

The tag 'Aadhaar judge' did not go down well with the bench and Justice Chandrachud said, "I take strong exception to this remark. We are here neither to defend the government action nor are we here to toe the NGOs' line. We are committed to our conscience and the Constitution."

Hinting at the moral pressure exerted these days by counsel appearing for NGOs, Justice Chandrachud said, "We are not bound to decide cases as per personal feelings of petitioners or people. We ask questions to all sides to understand logic behind arguments. If asking questions to the petitioner (challenging Aadhaar) will earn me 'nationalist' tag, then I will accept it. We are here to pro-

tect national interest and Constitution. If our commitment to our conscience and the Constitution becomes the ground for criticism, we will take it."

Justice Chandrachud, as part of a nine-judge constitution bench, had written the main judgment giving fundamental right status to 'right to privacy' and had ruled that it was intrinsic to right to life. Though he had also expressed concern over alleged leak of personal data collected for Aadhaar, he had said it could be necessary to ensure that subsidy and foodgrains reached the targeted population. He had also underlined the need for a robust security mechanism to protect personal data given by citizens.













RIHANNA URGES LEADERS, INCLUDING UK PM MAY & FRANCE PREZ MACRON, TO FUND GLOBAL EDUCATION

# TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, COIMBATORE | SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2018

AT THE TOUCH OF LOVE  
EVERYONE BECOMES A  
POET – PLATO



#METOO MOVEMENT IS JUST A WAKE-UP CALL, NOT THE SOLUTION, SAYS AUTHOR MARGARET ATWOOD

## With Trump OK, GOP outs FBI's 'biased' Russia memo

Lot Of People Should Be Ashamed, Says US Prez

Eileen Sullivan

Washington: House Republicans released a previously secret memo on Friday in which they accuse senior officials at the FBI and justice department of bias in the early stages of the Russia investigation. The House Intelligence Committee made the memo public after a week of pleading from senior national security officials not to disclose the classified details, reading it aloud on a conference call with reporters after President Trump declassified the memo.

"A lot of people should be ashamed of themselves and much worse than that," Trump said on Friday. The memo alleges that senior government officials favoured Democrats over Republicans and accuses federal law enforcement officials of abusing their authorities when they sought permission to surveil a former Trump campaign adviser, Carter Page.

Democrats say it is a Republican attempt to push a narrative that would undercut the investigation into Russia's 2016 election meddling and possible coordination with the Trump campaign. Earlier on Friday, Trump said top officials and investigators at the FBI and justice department have "politicised the sacred investigative process."

The early-morning Twitter post reinforced reports that Trump, in allowing the Republican memo to be re-



The memo, secret till now, alleges that senior government officials favoured Democrats over Republicans

leased, is seeking to clean house in the upper ranks of the FBI, and the justice department, even at the risk of losing his own FBI director, Christopher A. Wray. Earlier this week, the FBI made an unusual public plea not to release the document, which could reveal classified sources and methods. Trump declassified the memo without requesting any redactions.

Trump had an opportunity to block the memo, which his own top national security officials have requested because of national security concerns. The document was written by aides to Representative Devin Nunes of California, the Republican chairman of the House Intelligence Committee who has been an avid supporter of Trump.

In response to Trump's Twitter post on Friday, representative Adam B. Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said it is unthinkable that the top elected official in the US

would release classified information to attack the FBI. Schiff and other Democrats on the Intelligence Committee drafted their own memo, a rebuttal which they say adds context to the Republican document. Republicans on the committee voted not to release the Democratic memo, but did support a motion that all lawmakers be allowed to review it.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, of Wisconsin, supports the release of that second memo "in favour of greater transparency," Ryan's spokeswoman AshLee Strong said on Friday. "If it is scrubbed to ensure it does not reveal sources and methods of our intelligence gathering, the speaker supports the release of the Democrats' memo," Strong said.

Trump has consistently criticised the FBI and the justice department while asking senior officials for loyalty. He has also denounced the Russian investigation and called

Kremlin: US hunting for Russians to arrest around the world

Russia has issued a travel warning recommending its citizens think twice before travelling abroad, saying the US was hunting for Russians to arrest around the world. The foreign ministry statement warns Russian citizens that when abroad they face a serious threat of arrest by other countries at Washington's request. "We strongly insist that Russians carefully weigh up all the risks when planning trips abroad," the travel advisory said. It said more than 10 Russians had been detained in foreign countries with US involvement since 2017. REUTERS

it a hoax and a witch hunt.

Ryan told reporters on Thursday that the memo was not an attempt to undercut the Russia investigation. Instead, he described it as Congress carrying out its oversight role. "This memo is not an indictment of the FBI, of the department of justice. It does not impugn the Mueller investigation or the deputy attorney general," he said, referring to Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel investigating the Russian election meddling and whether Trump obstructed justice.

Page was on the radar of intelligence agencies for years when Trump named him to be one of his foreign policy advisers in 2016. He had visited Moscow in July 2016 and was preparing to return there that December when investigators obtained the warrant. White House officials have described Page as a gadfly who had been "put on notice" by the campaign and whom Trump did not know. NYT NEWS SERVICE

## Ex-prez Nasheed's release breathes new life into Maldives' opposition

Male: The exiled former president of the Maldives said Friday he will run again for office, hours after a surprise Supreme Court decision to free a group of political prisoners led to overnight clashes in the capital of the Indian Ocean archipelago.

President Yameen Abdul Gayoom had been set to run for re-election virtually unopposed, with all of his opponents either jailed or exiled. But ex-President Mohammed Nasheed, who is among the prisoners ordered freed, said he would challenge Yameen, who has rolled back many democratic reforms since coming to power five years ago.

"I can contest and I will win it again," Nasheed said in Colombo, the capital of neighbouring Sri Lanka. Nasheed was jailed in 2016 but received asylum in Britain later that year after travelling there on medical leave from prison. He has lived in exile ever since.

Nasheed also called for reforms in the country's security services, saying "a small element within the military and police want to prop up the dictatorship" of Yameen.

The capital city, Male, was calm on Friday, with stores open and people going to work, despite the overnight violence between police and protesters. Scuffles between protesters and police broke out again on Friday night, and two people were arrested, but the confrontation ended quickly.

The Thursday court ruling



'I WILL RUN AGAIN': Maldives ex-President Mohammed Nasheed, among those ordered freed on Thursday, said he'll contest polls again

ordered the release of the political dissidents, saying their guilty verdicts had been influenced by politics. It also ordered new trials for all nine. It was not immediately clear how retrials would affect the upcoming elections, but the opposition alliance welcomed the ruling in a statement, saying it "effectively ends Yameen's authoritarian rule".

Hundreds of joyous Nasheed supporters poured into the streets of Male after the verdict, waving flags. But clashes broke out quickly after Yameen fired the country's police chief, whose department had announced that it would uphold the SC verdict. The clashes lasted about three hours, with police dispersing rock-throwing crowds using pepper spray and batons.

Known for its tourist resorts, the Maldives became a multi-party democracy 10 years ago after decades of auto-

cratic rule by the current president's half-brother, strongman Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. But the nation lost much of its democratic gains after Yameen was elected in 2013. The half-brothers have since fallen out, and the former leader has joined the opposition.

The court also reinstated 12 lawmakers who had been ousted for switching allegiance to the opposition. When those lawmakers return, Yameen's Progressive Party of the Maldives will lose its majority in the Parliament. The government said in a statement it was trying to "vet and clarify" the court's ruling and "will work to engage, and consult with, the SC in order to comply with the ruling in line with proper procedure and the rule of law".

In 2015 Nasheed was sentenced to 13 years in prison, convicted of terrorism charges in a trial widely condemned by international rights groups. AP

India urges Male to abide by SC ruling

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India came out strongly in support of the Maldivian opposition on Friday as it asked the Abdulla Yameen government to abide by the Maldives Supreme Court ruling that all political prisoners, including former president Mohamed Nasheed, be freed.

The Indian government is closely watching the situation in the archipelago with the opposition led by Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party insisting that the court ruling had made it impossible for Yameen to remain in power.

"We have seen last night's order of the Supreme Court of Maldives releasing all political prisoners. In the spirit of democracy and rule of law, it is imperative for all organs of the government of Maldives to respect and abide by the order of the apex court," said an MEA statement, while expressing hope that the safety and security of the Indian expatriates in Maldives will be ensured by the authorities under all circumstances.

"As a close and friendly neighbour, India wishes to see a stable, peaceful and prosperous Maldives. We are closely monitoring the evolving situation," it added.

## Youtube suspends Pak govt channel

User Alleges Copyright Violation

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

Islamabad: Pakistan government's YouTube account was suspended on Friday on charges of copyright infringement after a local vlogger complained that his footage was used without permission.

The suspension came after Irfan Junejo, who is popular for his travelogues, registered a complaint with the Google-owned YouTube. He



On Friday, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani termed Pakistan a 'Taliban centre' and demanded action on the terror front

said footage from one of his travelogues from a north-western hill station was used by the Pakistan government to promote "family friendly activities in Pakistan".

US 'not considering' military ops in Pak

The US is not contemplating military operations inside Pakistan, the Pentagon has said. Instead, the US is seeking Pakistan's cooperation in operations under Trump's new South Asia strategy, the Pentagon's joint staff director Kenneth F. McKenzie said. PTI

'Pak killed over 176k militants since 9/11'

Pakistan foreign office said on Friday that it had killed more than 17,600 militants in counter-terrorism operations started after the 9/11 terror attacks and destroyed their training camps in the restive tribal region bordering Afghanistan. PTI

UK mosque attacker jailed for 43 years

Naomi Cantan | TNN

London: A British right-wing terrorist who rammed a van into a group of Muslim worshippers outside a mosque in London in June last year because he "hated Muslims" has been jailed for 43 years.

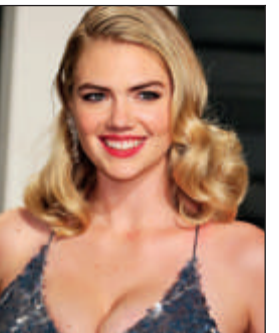
Forty-eight-year-old Darren Osborne, who is a father of four from Wales, was sentenced at the Woolwich crown court on Friday after being found guilty of murdering Bangladeshi Makram Ali, 51, and the attempted murder of nine other people, some of whom were of South Asian origin, in the Finsbury Park area of London last year.

## Now, top model says Guess chief sexually harassed her

Top model Kate Upton has accused Guess Inc chairman Paul Marciano of sexual harassment, in allegations that invoke the #MeToo movement. Marciano denied any misconduct toward the supermodel and actress.

In a regulatory filing on Thursday, Guess said that it became aware of Upton's "concerns" on Wednesday when she posted the accusations on social media. Though Marciano disavowed wrongdoing, the company said it "will fully investigate her claims once they are known to determine if they have any merit".

The Los Angeles-based



Kate Upton's claim sent shares of the fashion powerhouse crashing on Thursday

company also said it has investigated two other allegations against Marciano that were brought forth by an en-

tertainment website in November. One — taken from a lawsuit filed in 2009 — was denied by the executive at the time, Guess said. The company and outside counsel investigated and didn't corroborate the plaintiff's claims, according to the filing.

A different woman alleges that Marciano sexually assaulted her during a visit to Guess headquarters, according to the Blast entertainment site. The executive denies that allegation as well, Guess said.

Shares of the fashion house plummeted on Thursday after Upton's allegations surfaced on Instagram and Twitter. BLOOMBERG

Fidel Castro's eldest son kills himself

Havana: The eldest son of late Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, Fidel Castro Diaz-Balart, committed suicide on Thursday after being treated for months for depression, state-run media reported.

The nuclear scientist, also known as "Fidelito", or Little Fidel, because of how much he looked like his father, had the highest public profile of all of Castro's children. He was born in 1949 out of Castro's brief marriage to Mirta Diaz-Balart before he went on to topple a US-backed dictator and build a communist-run state on the doorstep of the United States during the Cold War. REUTERS

### AROUND THE WORLD

George Clooney reveals how he met wife Amal

Actor George Clooney has opened up about how he met his wife Amal Clooney. The "Money Monster" actor said he "didn't leave the house" when he met his future wife. "A mutual friend of ours said, 'I'm stopping by and can I bring my friend?' And I was like, 'Of course. (Then) I got a call from my agent, who called me and said, 'I met this woman who's coming to your house who you're gonna marry,'" he said in an interview. "And the funniest thing was my mom and dad were visiting... and we just talked and we stayed up all night talking and then, you know, I got her email address cause she was going to send me some pictures of my parents and then, we started writing and I didn't know if she wanted to go out with me. I just thought, you know, we were buddies." Clooney, 56, and Amal, 39, got married in 2014.



'AUNT MAY' IN CHINA: Britain's PM Theresa May and her husband Philip with students in Shanghai on Friday. May landed in China earlier this week fending off questions about her future amid mounting accusations of poor leadership over Brexit. The 61-year-old leader has been affectionately nicknamed 'Aunt May' by Chinese citizens. Asked about her new moniker, May said she was honoured

Sisters charged with killing 3-yr-old boy over cupcake

Two sisters, including the legal guardian of a 3-year-old child, have been charged with beating him to death with a baseball bat over a cupcake in the US city of Atlanta, according to a media report. LaShirley Morris, 27, and her sister, Glendria Morris, 25, have been charged with the killing of Kejuan Mason last year. "They were mad at the young

boy for taking a cupcake from the kitchen," the police said.

After 24 surgeries, B'desh 'tree man' relapses

A year ago, Abul Bajandar, a Bangladeshi dubbed "tree man" for the bark-like growths that once covered his body, appeared to have made a full recovery from the rare condition that has afflicted him for a decade. But twelve months after doctors declared him cured following 24 surgeries,

Bajandar's hands are once again covered in the growths that characterise his rare condition. "I am scared to have any more surgeries," the 27-year-old said.

A wild ride: Sinkhole swallows man & his bike

A motorcyclist got the ride of his life in Georgia when a sinkhole opened up in a parking lot and swallowed him and his bike. Firefighters pulled the man from the hole on Wednesday.

## Why N Koreans won't get Samsung phones at winter Oly

Seoul: All of the almost 3,000 athletes competing at the upcoming Pyeongchang Winter Olympics are set to get perks, including the latest \$1,100 Samsung smartphones and sleek Nike uniforms.

All except perhaps the 22 athletes from North Korea. Tough international sanctions, including travel restrictions and a ban on the sale of luxury goods and sports gear, have complicated South Korean Olympic organisers' efforts to provide their northern

neighbours the same benefits available to other Olympians.

For months, South Korean President Moon Jae-in has sought North Korea's participation in the hopes it will ease tensions between the still officially warring nations and prevent the kind of violent incidents which have plagued previous major events hosted by the South.

Overshadowing those efforts are a host of US and UN Security Council sanctions on Pyongyang over its efforts to

develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the US.

At almost every turn, South Korea has had to go great lengths to make sure its hospitality doesn't run afoul of sanctions or other laws, according to South Korean officials.

Samsung Electronics, an official sponsor of the Winter Games, is offering 4,000 Galaxy Note 8 smartphones specially designed for the Olympics to "all" of the participating athletes. But South Korea is not sure if North Korean athletes will

be eligible for the treats because of the UNSC sanctions, an Olympics organiser said.

Experts say providing the \$1,100 Samsung phone could violate UN sanctions that ban the sale of luxury items and electronics which have a potential "dual" commercial and military use.

Meanwhile, the joint women's hockey team will wear uniforms made by a Finnish company instead of official sponsor Nike, because of concerns about US sanctions.







# Wristband alerts your boss if you're slacking

## E-Tail Giant Patents Tech That Monitors Workers' Breaks.... And Also If They Pause For A Scratch

**Ceylan Yeginsu**

What if your employer made you wear a wristband that tracked your every move, and that even nudged you via vibrations when it judged that you were doing something wrong? What if your supervisor could identify every time you paused to scratch or fidget, and for how long you took a bathroom break? What may sound like dystopian fiction could become a reality for Amazon warehouse workers around the world. The company has won two patents for such a wristband, though it was unclear if Ama-

zon planned to actually manufacture the tracking device and have employees wear it. The online retail giant, which plans to build a second headquarters and recently shortlisted 20 potential host cities for it, has also been known to experiment in-house with new technology before selling it worldwide. Amazon, which rarely discloses information on its patents, could not immediately be reached for comment on Thursday. But the patent disclosure goes to the heart about a global debate about privacy and security. Amazon already has a reputation for a workplace culture that thrives on a hard-



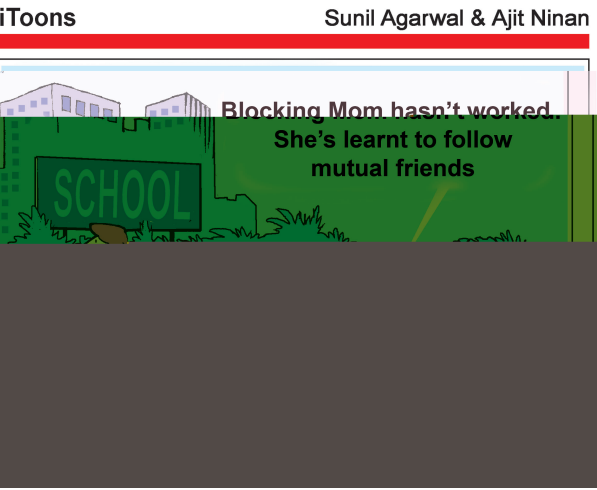
AFP/For representation

**DYSTOPIA?**

er, note that a lot can go wrong even with everyday tracking technology. On Monday, the tech industry was jolted by the discovery that Strava, a fitness app that allows users to track their activities and compare their performance with other people running or cycling in the same places, had unwittingly highlighted the locations of US military bases and the movements of their personnel in Iraq and Syria. The patent applications, filed in 2016, were published in September, and Amazon won them this week, according to 'GeekWire'. In theory, Amazon's proposed technology would emit

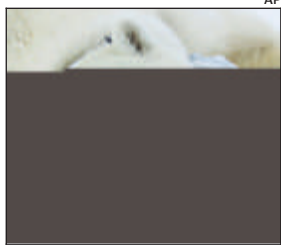
ultrasonic sound pulses and radio transmissions to track where an employee's hands were in relation to inventory bins, and provide "haptic feedback" to steer the worker towards the correct bin. The aim, Amazon says, is to streamline "time consuming" tasks, like responding to orders and packaging them for speedy delivery. With guidance from a wristband, workers could fill orders faster. Critics say such wristbands raise concerns about privacy and would add a new layer of surveillance to the workplace, and that the use of the devices could result in employees being treated more like

robots than human beings. Max Crawford, a former Amazon warehouse worker in Britain, said in a phone interview, "After a year working on the floor, I felt like I had become a version of the robots I was working with." Crawford agreed that the wristbands might save some time and labour, but he said the tracking was "stalkerish" and feared that workers might be unfairly scrutinised if their hands were "in the wrong place at the wrong time." "They want to turn people into machines," he said. "The robotic technology isn't up to scratch yet, so until it is, they will use human robots." nvt



# Arctic ice thins, so do polar bears

Some polar bears in the Arctic are shedding weight during the time they should be beefing up, a study shows. It's the climate change diet and scientists say it's not good. They blame global warming for the dwindling ice cover on the Arctic Ocean that bears need for hunting seals each spring. The scientists spied on polar bears by equipping nine female white giants with tracking collars that had video cameras and the bear equivalent of a Fitbit during three recent springs. The bears were also weighed. What the scientists found is that five of the bears lost weight and four lost 1.3 to 2.5 kg per day. The average polar bear studied weighed about 175 kg. One bear lost 23 kg in just nine days. "You're talking a pretty amazing amount of mass to lose," said US Geological Survey (USGS) wildlife biologist Anthony Pagano, lead author of the study, in Thursday's edition of 'Science'. Researchers studied the bears for 10 days in April, when they are supposed to begin putting on weight so they can later have cubs, feed them and survive through the harsh winter. But because the ice is shrinking, the bears are having a harder time catching seal pups even during prime hunting time, Pagano said. The US Fish and Wildlife Service lists polar bears as a threatened species. Polar bears hunt from the ice.



AP

One of the polar bears equipped with GPS video-camera collars for a new alarming study

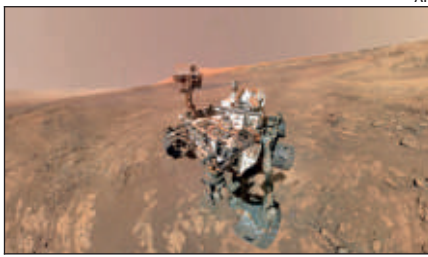
They often wait for seals to pop out of holes to get air and at other times they swim after seals. If there is less sea ice and it is broken apart, bears have to travel more — often swimming — and that has serious consequences, such as more energy use, hypothermia and risk of death, said University of Alberta biology professor Andrew Derocher, who wasn't part of the study. The study found that on the ice, the polar bears burn up 60% more energy than thought, based on these first real-life measurements done on the ice. A few of the bears travelled more than 250 km in about 10 days, Pagano said. "Just to break even they have to capture at least one seal every five to 10 days — and that's just to break even," said study co-author George Durner, a USGS research zoologist. The ice cover in the Arctic grows in the winter and melts in the summer. Because of climate change, the ice is shrinking and thinning more and earlier, he said. AP

### SHORT CUTS

#### UK allows doctors to make three-parent babies

Britain's fertility authority says it has granted permission to doctors at a clinic to create babies from the DNA of three people, to help prevent two women from passing on fatal, genetic diseases to their children. It is the first such approval for the UK but the technique has already been used: a baby was born in Mexico in 2016 using the experimental therapy. The treatment fixes problems linked to mitochondria, the energy-producing structures outside a cell's nucleus. Faulty mitochondria can result in conditions including muscular dystrophy and major organ failure.

**Self-flying taxi tested:** Airbus said on Friday it had successfully held the first test flights of the Vahana, an electric, pilotless flying vehicle that it hopes will be able to ferry people around cities. The aircraft, which Airbus has been developing for less than two years, is designed to carry one passenger and fly autonomously, according to its website.



AP

**HAIL THE SPACE SELFIE:** Nasa has transformed selfies taken by its Mars rover Curiosity into a stunning self-portrait. The photo shows Curiosity in the middle of the dusty, red Martian terrain, with Mount Sharp in the background. The rim of Gale Crater is also visible

#### Migraine may be a sign of ailing heart

Rachel Hosie

Suffering with migraines could be a sign of underlying heart problems, a 19-year investigation involving more than half a million people has suggested. Cardiovascular problems including heart attacks, stroke, blood clots and irregular heart rates are all linked to migraine, according to the research published in the 'British Medical Journal'. People who suffer from migraines were more likely to have a heart attack than those with no major headache symptoms — 25 per 1,000 compared with 17 per 1,000. Forty-five in 1,000 migraine sufferers also experienced a common form of stroke, 20 more than those who don't get migraines. Researchers found that the average age someone was diagnosed with a migraine was 35 and 71% were women. THE INDEPENDENT

# The 'private surgery' that's stoking debate

**Rio de Janeiro:** In Brazil, a country famed for its obsession with the body beautiful, women are increasingly opting for surgery aimed at improving the appearance of their genitals. Plastic surgeons in the country, known for pioneering the Brazilian Butt Lift that transfers fat from other areas of the body to the buttocks, have seen a massive spike in demand for labiaplasty, a surgery that slims or plumps the labia.

The number of women in Brazil having such surgery soared by 80% to 23,155 in 2016, the highest in the world, according to figures from the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery

### PORN EFFECT?

(ISAPS). By comparison, the US, which has around 55% more people, registered 13,266 procedures. Critics say the trend is a worrying sign of how pornography is

warping women's sense of their bodies, as a cultural preference for pubic hair removal pressures them to conform to new notions of genital perfection, labelled by some 'the designer vagina'. Plastic surgeons, meanwhile, argue that it is a form of female empowerment. "Latin women live in a macho culture: he is the one who rules in the office, in the home, in the sex life. Now as women ... we are leading at home and in jobs and we want to lead in

our sex lives," said Lina Triana, a Colombian plastic surgeon who performs the procedure. Labiaplasty originated in the 1970s with reconstructive surgery to remove excess tissue from labia minora that could cause pain during sexual intercourse, Triana said. But techniques have improved and demand soared 45% worldwide from 2015 to 2016, making it the fastest growing cosmetic surgery, according to ISAPS. REUTERS

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SONY CEO KAZUO HIRAI (L) WILL STEP DOWN, CFO KENICHIRO YESHIDA TO TAKE OVER



COCA-COLA WILL LAUNCH THUMS UP GLOBALLY: INDIA HEAD T KRISHNAKUMAR

# Fixed bill limits may make ₹5L health cover affordable

Current Pvt Mediciam Costs Up To ₹20K For Family Of Five

Mayur.Shetty@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The insurance industry is confident that the cost of providing the ₹5-lakh cover under the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) can be brought down to a fraction of the current figure for providing a similar cover under private mediclaim, which ranges from ₹13,000 to ₹20,000 for a family of five.

“Unlike the standard mediclaim which is an urban phenomenon, a big chunk of the people covered under the NHPS are living in remote districts. The healthcare facilities are largely trust, missionary and district hospitals where the cost is significantly lower,” said Apollo Munich Health Insurance CEO Antony Jacob. “My guess is the cost of the scheme will be between ₹10,000 crore and ₹50,000 crore,” he added.

According to Jacob, the government will have defined limits for defined procedures. “It has been done un-

## COVER DRIVE

Cost of a ₹5L cover for a 30-year-old husband and wife with 3 kids\*

Co	Conditions	Premium (INR)
Oriental Insurance	10% deduction	13,464
Apollo Munich	—	16,882
Star Health	restore benefit	20,060
Religare Health	restore benefit	16,048
Max Bupa	restore benefit	17,432
New India Assurance	—	12,189
ICI Lombard	—	18,104

\*Includes all taxes

Source: Coverfox.com and Company websites

der the Central Government Health Scheme and the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY). I have no doubt that there will be defined limits with NHPS,” he said. But the real challenge would be in making available healthcare facilities in remote areas, he said.

Sources say that the government is looking at a budget of around ₹1,500 per family. The Centre also plans to get state governments to be part of the scheme by merging

what they spend on health insurance or health assurance schemes with the NHPS. At present, states are evenly divided between the insurance and assurance models. While Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu

are using the insurance model, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat are using the assurance model. Under the assurance model, instead of paying premium to an insurance company, the government manages the

scheme though a third-party administrator (TPA). According to TPAs who facilitate cashless settlement of health claims, for insurance companies the RSBY scheme — which provides a cover of up to ₹30,000 — can break even at a family premium of ₹300-400. State governments have been providing insurance cover of up to ₹1.5 lakh with a premium of ₹700 per family.

The head of a TPA company said, “It would be possible to design a ₹5-lakh cover with a ₹1,500 premium. The key rider is that unlike private mediclaim, which covers everything, here the spending in tertiary hospitals will be limited to defined procedures with defined package costs.”

Insurers say the premium hospitals in metros have not agreed to the rates for procedures prescribed under RSBY and state government schemes. There are large private hospitals who have agreed to do major surgeries at a fraction of the cost charged to private hospitals.

## Hike in duty on medical devices reversed

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Mumbai: The first rollback of the Budget has happened. In a protectionist measure, customs duty increased in the Budget on medical devices to encourage the domestic industry, has been reversed by a finance ministry notification issued on Friday, sources told TOI. The customs duties on two categories of medical devices were increased to 7.5% and 10% from 5% and 7.5%. Now, as a result of the notification, it's back to the original level, sending the domestic industry into a tizzy.

Terming the development “a deathblow”, the Rs 9,000 crore domestic industry suspects “foul play at the behest of the powerful US medical devices industry lobby”, and has decided to ask government to investigate the issue.

“Our market share is coming down drastically, with nearly 90% of devices imported, including even basic products like syringes, needles and thermometers. For the last four years, we have waited for measures to be announced by the government to boost manufacturing, but they speak ‘Make in India’, but actually encourage import and sell in India”, Rajiv Nath, forum coordinator Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMDI) told TOI.

The installed manufacturing capacity is lying idle, and many manufacturers are converting to traders, and realigning their business strategy as importers/marketers after resigning to lack of government support, and facing discrimination at even government-owned hospitals, he said.

Domestic manufacturers are finding it difficult to compete in government tenders due to low-priced Chinese products procuring tenders, or being beaten by restrictive conditions on “perceived quality”.

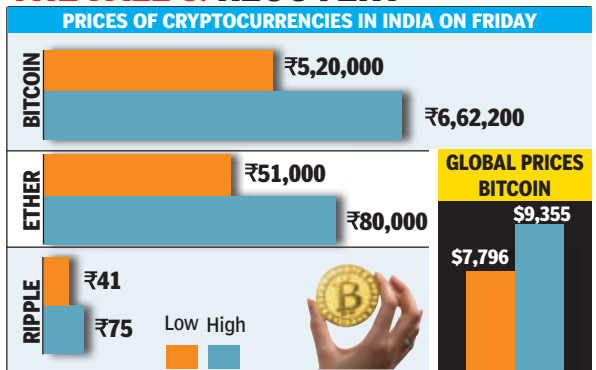
## Cryptocurrencies see huge volatility on govt warning

Shalina.Pillai@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Cryptocurrencies continued to plunge through most of Friday, a day after finance minister Arun Jaitley said in his Budget speech that they are not legal tender and the government would take all measures to eliminate their use as part of the payment system. But late evening, these currencies made a sharp recovery. By about 8 pm, they had not only recovered all of the Friday losses, but also some of Thursday's.

Jaitley's statement also impacted cryptocurrency prices around the world, all of which fluctuated in line with the Indian movements. International media reported that drops over the past two days were largely on account of the proposed Indian action. On Friday, bitcoin prices dropped some 15% to ₹5.3 lakh (per bitcoin) compared to Thursday's close. But by 8 pm, it was back at ₹6.4 lakh. Other cryptocurrencies like etherium, ripple, and litecoin al-

## THE FALL & RECOVERY



so fell and rose similarly. Ether dropped 31% to hit a low of ₹55,000 from a high of ₹80,000 on Thursday. Litecoin dropped from a high of Rs 11,500 on Thursday to Rs 7,100 on Friday. But both made smart recoveries towards the end of the day.

In the international market, the value of bitcoin plunged from \$10,209 at the time of Jaitley's speech to \$9,873 in just two hours. On Friday, it fell to \$7,848, but then rose to \$8,800.

Apart from India, the hit was also attributed to regulators from countries like the US, UK, and South Korea now closely monitoring crypto-trading platforms.

Indian crypto-trading platforms like Unocoin, Zebpay, Koinex, and Coinsecure have been busy trying to salvage the situation, with many flooded with queries from nervous buyers on whether to sell their currencies or not.

## Tax exemption claim date for startups extended by 2 years

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Chennai: The sunset date for claiming a tax holiday/exemption by eligible startups has been extended. At present, eligible startups could claim deduction for three out of seven years, if incorporated between April 1, 2016 and April 1, 2019. This has been extended by two more years to April 1, 2021.

Further, the requirement of a total turnover of up to ₹25 crore for the eligible business, will now apply for seven years, beginning from their year of incorporation. “While it is in line with the Startup India plan, it is an additional condition for startups. Earlier, the turnover restriction ended as of March 2021. Now,

startups cannot exceed the turnover limit for seven years, from when they are incorporated,” said Ajay Roti, partner, Dhruva Advisors.

The definition of eligible startup has also been brought in lines with the action plan to bring in the aspect of employment or wealth creation.

## SOME RELIEF

Balaji Viswanathan, founder of Invento, a robotics startup, said while the Budget was a prudent one overall, there wasn't much for startups.

“Doubling funding for Digital India and having 5 lakh hotspots is a welcome move but more should be done. There is a need to involve startups in reforming the agriculture sector. The Mudhra scheme is

limited to ₹10 lakh in funding. Startups need more. We get stuck in between ₹10 lakh and ₹2 crore stage,” he said.

Angel Tax, a highly discussed topic went without a mention. K Ganesh, serial entrepreneur and partner, GrowthStory said, “Early stage startups, which are struggling to identify their business model, have been slapped with I-T notices. We were lobbying against this bizarre tax but nothing has happened. On the positive side, statements of intent on hybrid instruments being considered, recognition of role of angel investors and startup ecosystem are welcome steps but we need to see how this is translated in terms of actual policy.”

## MAT provisions eased for sick cos

Ranjani Ayyar & Lubna Kably | TNN

Chennai/Mumbai: Companies that are undergoing insolvency proceedings got some respite in Budget. Provisions relating to Minimum Alternative Tax (MAT) have been eased for sick companies. Further, the acquirer will be better equipped to carry forward and set off loss, which in turn will improve valuation of sick companies.

While computing profit on which MAT would be levied, a deduction is allowed for unabSORBED depreciation or brought forward loss, whichever is lower. An amendment has been proposed to allow companies, against whom a proceeding for corporate insolvency process has been admitted, to claim a deduction for both unabSORBED



BURDEN RELAXED

depreciation and brought forward loss.

“Under current provisions, where the brought forward loss or unabSORBED depreciation was nil, no deduction was allowed to arrive at the adjusted book profit on which MAT would be computed. The amendment will remove the barrier for rehabilitating companies seeking insolvency resolution,” says Abhishek Goenka, direct

tax leader at PwC India. Any significant change in shareholding of a company, under a resolution plan, approved under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), will not result in lapse of carried forward loss of such company. The income tax authorities will be given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in the insolvency process. Currently, to enable carry forward and set off of loss, a continuity of at least 51% shareholding is required.

Vipul Jhaveri, managing partner, tax, at Deloitte India says these amendments have material implication from a tax cost perspective and will make takeover of the sick company more lucrative from a tax perspective. “This is a critical move and will help in improving valuation.”

“The government is trying to bring in changes in regulatory and tax framework to make the IBC process work. An enabling amendment or a circular to clarify that any benefit derived by a company on writing back loan waived by the lender shall not be subject to tax would help curtail potential litigation as benefit derived by a company on waiver of loan by lenders have been held by certain judicial precedents as taxable,” said K. Marmangalam Vijay, partner, J Sagar Associates, a law firm.

“In case of several distress sales, the companies had significant unabSORBED depreciation. There was no bar on carry forward and set off of such depreciation. With carry forward of loss now being allowed, another hurdle has been removed,” Goenka added.

## Apple India clocks highest ever revenue growth in qtr

New Delhi/New York: iPhone maker Apple notched up a double-digit growth in its revenue from India in the quarter to December 2017, its all-time quarterly record to date.

Apple has been expanding its presence in the hyper-competitive Indian smartphone market, even though its products are priced at a premium. Apple posted 13% year-on-year growth in revenue at \$88.3 billion in the said quarter and profit of \$3.9 per share. International sales accounted for 65% of the quarter's revenue.

“Our results were terrific all around the world with double-digit revenue growth in all our geographic segments, an all-time quarterly record in the vast majority of markets we track, including the US...as well as Mainland China... and India,” Apple chief financial officer Luca Maestri said on an investor call.

The comments come a day after the Indian government raised the customs duty on imported smartphones to 20% as part in Budget 2018-19.

The move, aimed at encouraging local manufacturing and domestic value-addition, may impact Apple as it imports its devices, except iPhone SE that is assembled in India. According to research firm Counterpoint, the premium smartphone segment in India witnessed over 20% growth in 2017 over the previous year with Apple maintaining its leadership position with 38% market share during 2017.

The iPhone X was the top premium model, ahead of One Plus 5T and Samsung's Note 8 in the segment, as per Counterpoint.

“Our growth was broad-based and a key driver was iPhone, which generated its highest revenue ever...revenue for our newly launched iPhone was the highest of any lineup in our history, driving total Apple revenue above our guidance range,” Apple CEO Tim Cook said. AGENCIES

## Madras HC stays winding up case involving Nissan

HC Orders Notices to NCLT, SRL Advisors, Union Ministry Of Corporate Affairs

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Chennai: Nissan Motor India and Renault Nissan Automotive India have approached the Madras high court seeking to declare certain provisions of Companies (Transfer of Pending Proceedings) Rules directing the winding up proceedings filed/pending under the Companies Act to be treated as an application under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, involving them.

The two automobile makers approached the high court seeking intervention, for a case under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, to be adjudicated by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), as ultra vires the legislative competence of the parliament and the Constitution.



DECISION PENDING

Admitting the plea, the first bench of Chief Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice Abdul Quddus passed an interim order staying such proceedings pending before the NCLT, Chennai bench involving the petitioner companies.

The bench also ordered notice to the Union ministry of

corporate affairs, NCLT, and SRL Advisors LLP, a firm providing financial, tax and accounting services returnable by March 2. The issue pertains to a winding up proceeding initiated by SRL Advisors, which was formerly engaged by the petitioners for services, relating to finance, tax and accounting.

Subsequently, noticing ‘enormous and serious frauds in the dealings,’ the petitioners terminated the services of the firm on July 24, 2014, reserving its rights to claim amounts paid in excess or demands or liabilities arising out of the gross negligence/wilful misconduct and other amounts illegally/fraudulently misappropriated by the firm in connivance and collusion with ex-employees of the petitioners.

## Foreign funds fared well unlike dom ones

From P 1

Interestingly, though, in Friday's session, foreign funds clocked a net inflow of ₹950 crore, compared with ₹509 crore net selling by domestic funds. There are additional concerns that some of the foreign players may shift part of their portfolio to Singapore, where the exchange is planning to launch derivative contracts on the 50 stocks that constitute NSE's Nifty index. On Friday, the yield on the benchmark 10-year government securities rose to a high of 7.68%, from 7.17% when it was introduced on January 5. A rising gilt yield puts pressure on banks to hike their lending and deposit rates. “Global market volatility led by rising bond yields, profit-booking (Indian markets had posted a strong monthly gain before the Budget) and concerns on deteriorating macro-economic conditions were the probable reasons for the market fall,” said Sandeep Chordia, EVP strategy, Kotak Securities. During the day, the sell-off in the stock market also caused the Indian rupee to weaken. It closed at 64.06 to the dollar, more than a month-low figure. On Thursday, the rupee had closed at 64.03.

## Exemption for gains up to ₹1l to aid small investors

From P 1

In the current regime, those who have invested in a scheme for, say, a child's education needs 10 years later, may be at a disadvantage. Adhia, however, maintained that the interests of small investors had been protected by providing exemption for gains up to ₹1 lakh. Amid falling stock market indices, the top finance ministry official said currently there were two concessions available to investors reporting gains from investment in stock markets and the government had decided to tap into massive gains of ₹3.67 lakh crore, which remained untaxed until last year if the investments were sold after holding them for over 12 months. “There are two concessions. Short-term capital gains tax is 15% instead of normal marginal rate of tax (of up to 30%) that you pay. Two, long-term capital gains tax is only 10% instead of 20% for other asset classes. That's why, due to the special dispensation, we are continuing STT (securities transaction tax),” he said.

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# TIMES SPORT

THE TIMES OF INDIA, COIMBATORE | SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2018

ALEXIS SANCHEZ POISED TO MAKE HOME DEBUT AS MAN UNITED TAKE ON HUDDERSFIELD



## ON THE CUSP OF HISTORY

### Dravid's Boys Take on Australia Seeking To Win Unprecedented Fourth Under-19 World Cup Title

**Mount Maunganui (New Zealand):** Unstoppable so far, India will be aiming to rewrite record books with a fourth title when the Rahul Dravid-coached side squares off against an equally formidable Australia in the final of the ICC Under-19 World Cup here on Saturday.

India and Australia are the two most successful teams in the history of the tournament, having won the coveted trophy thrice each. Dravid's sprightly boys will be desperate to outwit their Australian counterparts and become the first team in the history of the event to lift the trophy for a record fourth time.

The promising Prithvi Shaw, already being seen as the next big thing in Indian cricket, will be eager to join the likes of Mohammad Kaif (2002), Virat Kohli (2008) and Unmukt Chand (2012) in leading the side to the U-19 World Cup title.

Going by current form, the odds are heavily in favour of India. The Indians have put in some impressive performances to win all their five matches, including an emphatic 203-run win over Pakistan in the semifinal and a 100-run victory over Australia in their tournament-opener.

The massive win over Pakistan in the semifinal will do a world of good to India's confidence. After putting a total of 272 on the board, they dismissed the opposition for a paltry 69. So far, it has been collective performance from Dravid's boys as every member of the squad has contributed to the team's success.



India's batting has been at its lethal best. While the openers — Shaw and Manojt Kalra — have given the team good starts throughout the tournament, Shubman Gill has been in phenomenal form at the No. 3 position.

In fact, all eyes will be on Gill, who has been the most consistent batsman of the tournament. He scored a scintillating unbeaten century against Pakistan in the semis and will be eager to script one more impactful knock.

In the bowling department, Shivam Mavi and Kamlesh Nagarkoti have been phenomenal, raking up speeds in excess of 140kmph. But they will have their work cut out against a strong Australian batting lineup.

Abhishek Sharma is another important player in the squad to look up to, and he along with fellow spinner Anukul Roy will look to exploit the Australian batsmen's weaknesses against spin. Besides his spin, Abhishek is also a hard-hitting lower middle-order batsman who can score some quick runs. India's fielding has also been exemplary in the tournament so far.

India U-19 teams have had a legacy of producing future Indian stars and this group of players have the potential to make it big. Australia, on the other hand, will be desperate for revenge after their big loss to the Indians in the tournament opener. The Jason Sangha-led side's last two performances signal that they have upped their game when it has mattered.

**SMALL STEPS, GIANT LEAP:** India's U-19 captain Prithvi Shaw and Australian counterpart Jason Sangha pose with the U-19 World Cup in New Zealand



### KEY PLAYERS FOR INDIA

#### PRITHVI SHAW

The Mumbai lad shot into prominence as a 14-year old when he smashed 546 off 330 balls in an inter-school match. In September last year, at 17, Shaw became the youngest to score a century on Duleep Trophy debut, a record previously held by Sachin Tendulkar. The captain of India's U-19 team, Shaw has been consistent as an opener and has led the side with maturity and balance.

During the tournament, he was bought by Delhi Daredevils for Rs 1.2 crore at the IPL auction. Took two fine catches at gully during the semis against Pakistan. **Matches: 5, Runs: 232, HS: 94, Avg: 77.33, SR: 98.72.**

#### SHUBMAN GILL

With 341 runs under his belt in five games, this Punjab batsman has been the top-scorer for India in this World Cup. He has an uncanny similarity with India captain Virat Kohli in the way he plays his shots. Gill, who belongs to Chak Khara village in Punjab's Fazilka district, started wielding the willow at the age of four. His father Lakhwinder is a farmer and land owner. Shubman was

picked by Kolkata Knight Riders for a handsome Rs 1.8 crore in the IPL auction last Saturday. A consistently high-scorer in domestic age-group cricket, Gill will be a thorn in Australia's side if he stays at the wicket for a while. **Matches: 5, Runs: 341, HS: 102\*, Avg: 170.50, SR: 113.28.**

#### KAMLESH NAGARKOTI

The speed-guns in New Zealand have been clocking Nagarkoti consistently at 145 plus, which is unheard of at this level. Nagarkoti has been one of the most talked-about teenagers in New Zealand over the last two weeks, with everyone from Ian Bishop to Sourav Ganguly raving about his raw pace, athleticism and attitude. The wiry right-arm pacer became the most expensive buy in the current U-19 team when he was bought by KKR in the 2018 IPL auction for Rs 3.2 crore. The Rajasthan pacer's father was a subedar in the Indian Army who spent his retirement corpus to buy a one-bedroom apartment in Jaipur so his son could learn to play cricket. **Matches: 5, Wickets: 7, Best Bowling: 3-18, Avg: 15.14, Eco: 3.19**

#### SHIVAM MAVI

Like his pace colleague Nagarkoti, Mavi caught the cricketing world's attention when one of his deliveries touched 146kph on the speed gun, in India's opening match against

3

Both India and Australia have won the U-19 WC three times each -- India in 1999-00, 2007-08 & 2012; Australia in 1987-88; 2001-02 & 2009-10. In the only previous final between the two, India (227/4) beat Australia (225/8) by 6 wickets at Townsville on August 26, 2012

1

India are the only team to have an unbeaten record in this WC, winning all five ties by huge margins - Oz by 100 runs, PNG by 10 wks, Zim by 10 wks, Bangla by 131 runs and Pak by 203 runs



### STORM THREATENS FINAL

A strong storm, which left hundreds of tourists in New Zealand stranded on Friday and damaged roads, uprooted trees and felled power lines, now threatens the ICC Under-19 World Cup final between India and Australia in Mount Maunganui. Former tropical cyclone Fehi this week has brought heavy rain that flooded the southern city of Dunedin and west coast town of Buller, forcing authorities to declare a state of emergency and ask people not to travel by road.

As per the weather forecast for the day in that part of the world, there's a 70% chance of rain, which might affect, or even wash out the final. At the time of writing this, however, the weather in Tauranga was bright and sunny. There is a provision for a reserve day in case the final is washed out/incomplete. **TNN**

6

No. of 50-plus innings by Shubman Gill in youth one-dayers, a world record. He is also the only centurion for India in this WC

## Pacers will give us the edge: Captain Shaw

**Mount Maunganui (New Zealand):** India under-19 captain Prithvi Shaw believes the terrific form of his fast bowlers will give the three-time champions an edge when they take on Australia in pursuit of a record fourth ICC World Cup title.

"Whenever the team's needed them, they (fast bowlers) have provided the breakthroughs. They're ready whenever I ask them to bowl. They have good intensity as well, their fitness is great as well," Shaw said on the eve of the big match.

"All of them — Kamlesh (Nagarkoti), (Ishan) Porel, (Shivam) Mavi. It helps us all to have a good attitude in the field, we're all really pumped up when our fast bowlers do well," he added.

Shaw, however, was not bothered by the fact that the Indian middle order has not been tested enough, with the openers getting solid starts in all but one of five matches, including two century partnerships. No. 3 batsman Shubman Gill has been in scintillating form too, aggregating 341 runs at an average of 170.50, including one innings as opener.

"I have confidence that even if we get one partnership, we can take charge of the match and take the score to 250-300. If you look at our match against Australia too, we put up a good total, even though we lost a couple of wickets after an early partnership. The middle order also controlled the innings well," Shaw said.

The Indian skipper, though, was cautious and said Australia have improved considerably since the 100-run defeat his side inflicted on them early in the tournament.



CAN HE BAG THE BIG ONE? Rahul Dravid

"They (Australia) are a good side, it will be challenging for us even though they have lost against us in the first game. They have got a better side right now. We will stick to our process and will try to execute it on the field," Shaw said.

Touted as the next big thing in Indian cricket, Shaw himself has been in fine form, managing 232 runs in four innings with a best score of 94 against Australia in their tournament opener.

"I can't actually describe myself but I think so far I am really doing good," Shaw said about his own performance. "If you see the results, the batting and bowling and the intensity on the pitch and the attitude how the boys are behaving, it's a good sign till now."

Australia captain Jason Sangha, on the other hand, said his team would be looking to seize the initiative against India. "The 100-run loss does not bother me at all. A grand final is a different contest. It's a different pitch, different nerves. They've played good cricket but we wouldn't say we are underdogs. We are Australia." **TNN**

## We look for guys who embrace pressure: Kohli

**Captain seems to have found perfect mix in his quest for gamechangers**



K.ShriniwasRao@timesgroup.com

**Centurion:** Right now, Indian captain Virat Kohli has a happy problem of plenty. The team that stepped out to play the first of the six One-dayers against South Africa on Thursday can bat right up to No. 8. On the bowling front, at any given point of time, the skipper can choose from six or even seven options — six bowlers were used on Thursday — to give the team a massive advantage over any opposition.

So, when Kohli says this Indian team has found its "core" in the run-up to the 2019 ICC World Cup, he is quite certain of the team configurations he can pull off impressively. It is not just the options at hand that makes Kohli's team look so dangerous.

India's ability to slow down the tempo of the game and then raise it when needed has been another reason behind their winning run.

"We don't want to be one-dimensional. All options are open. We look at characters before we look at skill. We look at a guy who scored 40 when the team needed it the most, compared to a guy who has scored runs but might not have affected the state of the game that much. We look for gamechangers, we look for guys who embrace pressure," said Kohli.

Here's what Faf du Plessis, the South

### FINGER INJURY RULES OUT DU PLESSIS

**Johannesburg:** South African captain Faf du Plessis will miss the remainder of the One-day and T20 International series against India due to a finger injury. Du Plessis injured his right index finger during the first ODI and has a fracture which will require 3-6 weeks to heal. Du Plessis will undergo a period of rest and rehabilitation with the aim of being fit for the first Test against Australia on March 1. The selectors have included Farhaan Behardien as Du Plessis' replacement, with Heinrich Klaasen earning his maiden ODI call-up as a reserve wicketkeeper. The new SA captain will be named on Saturday. **TNN**

African skipper, had to say after the Durban game: "They slowed the game down, they got wickets through the middle period. If you can get wickets through the middle period, you'll win a lot of One-day games. We couldn't do that."

It wasn't only about India's slow bowlers enforcing it out on the field when South Africa batted. On the eve of the Durban match, when Kohli said the team was looking at Rahane to come in at No. 4, he was merely stating in words what has been on India's mind all this while. The Mumbai batsman's ability to tire out an attack makes him a delightful proposition in the longer format. Then, his ability to switch gears and go after the bowling makes him a good limited-overs option as well.

Rahane's 86-ball 79, studded with five boundaries and two sixes, was certainly one of his best ODI outings yet.

## 'Aggressive' Kuldeep is vital cog in India's 2019 wheel

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**Centurion:** Kuldeep Yadav is learning the tricks of his trade in the most natural way. He's bowling to the Indian top-order in the nets, and what better way for the 23-year-old to learn then bowling to the likes of Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane? "It gets a little easier to bowl if you know someone like Ajinkya," he says.

For a boy from Kanpur who started out as a fast bowler before realising that left-arm wrist-spin — still a very uncommon bowling style — had to be the way forward, learning the ropes quickly isn't a new thing.

Street-smartness comes relatively easily to Kanpurians — a term used for those who hail from Kanpur — and spending a bit of a time with Yadav suggests he's not the one to get left behind.

The 41st over is in progress, it's a small ground, there's a partnership going and he's been hit for a six. Any spinner would tend to bowl flatter but not Yadav. He went slower and flighted higher. A risk-taker's move.

"I took my chance. I felt I could get him out. The six didn't scare me. The wind carried the ball over the last time. I wanted him to play

exactly that shot (the one that went for six) because the leg-side boundary was shorter. I bowled a top-spinner. I was looking for a top edge if he went for the shorter boundary at midwicket. It was a good ball, but he played a good shot. We needed a wicket (du Plessis & Morris at the crease). I took the chance," he says.

Eventually Morris offered his wicket to Yadav off a full-toss, trying to slog. The bowling action, along with an aggressive mindset to bowl for wickets and not to contain, marks Yadav out as different.

"*Daalte ja. Ke ball lagenge inko samajhne mein* (keep bowling. I'll take them six balls to understand)," shouted MS Dhoni from behind the wickets. Yadav smiled.

"Actually I was confused a bit what I should bowl. Because I am playing in South Africa for first time. The wind was good and the ball was drifting, so I was asking Mahi bhai (MS) and he told just keep bowling," says Yadav.

Between Kohli, Rahane and Dhoni, the bowler does enjoy a good deal of confidence in the shorter formats, and bowling coach Bharat Arun has spent considerable amount of time with the young spinner right from the days of the junior circuit.

The mindset to stay aggressive, says Yadav, comes from Kohli. The bowler is convinced the skipper alone is the motivation. "The way Virat *bhai* talks, he tells us one extra wicket is more important than trying to save 10 runs. If your captain tells you that, then you start believing. We back our strengths."

In the road to 2019, Kuldeep is certain to remain a vital cog in the Indian ODI wheel.



Actually I was confused what I should bowl. I am playing in South Africa for the first time. The wind was good and the ball was drifting so I was confused which variation to use. So I was asking Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) and he told me, 'bowl as you are bowling'. It is good that he keeps advising from behind the wickets, it gets easier. As a spinner, Mahi bhai does 50 per cent of your work."

— Kuldeep Yadav | INDIA SPINNER

## Rahane's knock was as good as Virat's



The last 10 days in South Africa have been brilliant for the Indians, led by an exceptional Virat Kohli. It just goes to show, as it has in the past, that the Indian team gets better after spending some time in overseas conditions.

I am not surprised to see the performance of Kohli and his boys. The victory at Wanderers will be etched in the minds of the Kohli brigade. The value of this sort of win is not measured as just another win — its effect is far reaching and we saw that in the ODI in Durban where India dominated.

The match referee had to take a call on whether the Test should continue on Day 4 at the Wanderers and fortunately they took the right call otherwise it would have been grossly unfair to India, who showed unbelievable guts. I must also men-

tion Dean Elgar — he will remember that innings for a lifetime and it will be one of his best, despite all the runs he may get in the future.

I am extremely happy to see the way Ajinkya Rahane and Bhuvneshwar Kumar stamped their authority once again. They are invaluable to this team. Rahane's performance was not a surprise because he is a class act. Along with his quality as a batsman, what he needs to learn from his skipper is how to get a hundred. Maybe a dinner together will help! His knock of 79 in the first ODI was as good as Virat's but the difference is that Virat very rarely misses out on a ton once he is set.

There is still a lot of cricket to be played but I have a feeling that India have delivered the first psychological blow to South Africa over the last two matches. South Africa, without De Villiers and Steyn, have a big hole in their side.

Also, to leave out Ngidi and Philander was not the right decision. It will be hard to stop India if Phehlukwayo is brought in and he and Tahir are the fourth and fifth bowlers in this series. **GAMEPLAN**

#WhatDrivesYou  
**EXIDE**



SNAPSHOTS



**IN THE SWING OF THINGS:** Caroline Wozniacki returns to Anastasia Potapova of Russia in St.Petersburg

New No. 1 Wozniacki races into quarters

World No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki, fresh off her Australian Open victory, dropped just one game in a dominant performance to beat Russian youngster Anastasia Potapova at the St Petersburg Ladies' Trophy on Thursday. The 27-year-old Dane picked up a 6-0, 6-1 victory to set up a quarterfinal clash with another young Russian Daria Kasatkina, who defeated France's Alize Cornet on Wednesday.

Paes, Salisbury in semis of Dallas Challenger

Leander Paes and Joe Salisbury yet again emerged triumphant in a tense super tie breaker to progress to the semifinals of the \$125,000 RBC Tennis Championships of Dallas. The top-seeded Indo-American team overcame a spirited challenge from Ruben Gonzales and Hunter Reese 6-3, 2-6, 17-15 in the quarterfinals of the ATP Challenger event. They next face third seed Americans Austin Krajicek and Jackson Withrow.

Bhambri to lead India challenge at Chennai Open Challenger

Second seed Yuki Bhambri will lead India's challenge at the Chennai Open Challenger event, which will be held from February 10 to 17 in the city. Australia's Jordan Thompson, who is ranked 94th in the world, is the top seed. The other Indians in the main draw are Saketh Myneni, Sumit Nagal and Prajesh Gunneswaran.

Kapur, Joshi in 25th spot: India's Shiv Kapur shot a fine five-under 67 to occupy the tied 37th position with compatriot Khalin Joshi (70) among others after the second round of the Maybank Championship golf tournament in Kuala Lumpur on Friday. Kapur and Joshi took their two-day tally to seven-under 137.

Lahiri in danger of missing cut:

India's Anirban Lahiri shot an uncharacteristic one-over 72 to occupy the 83rd spot after the opening round of the Waste Management Phoenix Open at Scottsdale, Arizona, on Thursday. American Bill Haas returned a seven-under 64 card to open up a two-shot lead.

Ghosal becomes highest-ranked Indian player:

India's leading squash player, Saurav Ghosal, jumped five places to No. 14 to become the highest-ranked Indian player in the latest Professional Squash Association (PSA) rankings released on Friday. Ghosal beat Joshana Chinappa, who slipped three places to No. 17 while Dipika Pallikal Karthik remained on 20th.

Abhay advances to Qatar final:

India's Abhay Singh has moved into the final of the Qatar Circuit VI event, a PSA world tour event late on Thursday. The second seed Abhay had defeated Yannik Omorin in straight games 11-6, 11-4, 11-7.

# End of road for Saina, Marin

## Sindhu To Meet Ratchanok In Semis; Sai Praneeth And Kashyap Ousted

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**New Delhi:** One can call it a Black Friday.

Three Indian singles challengers, Saina Nehwal, Sai Praneeth and Purapalli Kashyap, fell by the wayside even before reaching the India Open semifinals on Friday evening.

World No. 3 PV Sindhu stands tall among disruptions around her as the 'dream final' remained a dream.

Beiwen Zhang from Las Vegas dashed all patriotic expectations with her no-nonsense counter-punching game to put it across Saina, the crowd favourite, 21-10, 21-13 in flat 32 minutes.

Looking flustered after trailing 0-6 in the first game, Saina never could muster a rescue operation. Zhang entangled her in

long rallies and forced her to make mistakes.

Another favourite, world No. 5 Carolina Marin too bit the dust. Her intermittent screams filled up the Siri Fort hall sending across desperate messages that everything wasn't right with her game.

### INDIA OPEN

As unheralded Cheung Ngan Yi kept clocking one point after another, the Spaniard's voice got shriller during the quarterfinal of the Yonex-Sunrise India Open on Friday evening.

Not one to be overawed by the noise or the weight of ranking, the 24-year old girl from Hong Kong kept making small dents at the Marin's confidence, finding winners with neat placements and flicks. The contest took 48



**OUTCLASSED:** Saina Nehwal stood no chance against Beiwen Zhang

minutes to turn on its head and the Olympic champion from Spain, a pre-tournament favourite, lost 21-21, 21-19.

Earlier, Sindhu sent a chill down the spine of the partisan

crowd after dropping a game before retrieving in time to get past Corrales Beatriz of Spain 21-12, 19-21, 21-11. Ratchanok Intanon, a winner in 2016 and a former world champion, awaits the Rio

Olympic silver medallist in the semifinals. "Ratchanok has a very tricky game and her stroke-making is dangerous. I can't make as many mistakes against her," said Sindhu.

On Friday, the India Open quarterfinals brought into focus the weakness once again as Parupalli Kashyap and Sai Praneeth exited through the turnstiles leaving the next two days' fight for the girls.

A disappointing outing in the second round took the top-seed, Kidambi Srikanth, out of reckoning and the clouds of doubt loomed on the abilities of the rest.

Though heavily-strapped, Kashyap, currently ranked 52nd seemed to be moving rather well against his ranked 35th ranked Chinese adversary Qiao Bin. But the 25-year old Chinese was reading Kashyap rather well. World No. 18 Sai Praneeth went down to Chou Tien Chen 15-21, 13-21.

## 'I will be at my best in All England'

**New Delhi:** Olympic champion **Carolina Marin** has sent a warning to her rivals in the badminton world, saying she expects to be at her absolute best during next month's All England Championships.

The 24-year-old from Spain clinched two World Championship titles, an All England title beside the Olympic crown - all within three years between 2014 to 2016.

But she lost motivation because of injuries post the Rio Games.

She suffered a hip injury during the Hong Kong Superseries and missed the Dubai Superseries Finals in December. Marin feels she still needs to sharpen her skills and vowed to be at her best at the All England Championships.

"I feel my performance is not 100 per cent but it would be there in the All England. I feel motivated because I want to keep improving my game. I will prepare very well for All England," said the former world no. 1 Marin.

"Last year it was hard because I had injuries after Olympics and my body needed a long break. It is always tough to keep going mentally after you have an injury but I have a good team.

"I had to believe in myself. I had to change my game during that phase and I didn't get enough time to prepare for tournaments. I want to focus on improving my game after this event," said Marin, who is playing at the India Open here.

The All England Championships is schedule to be held from March 14 to 18 at Birmingham. **PI**

# Minerva suffer first loss of the season

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**Vasco:** This was a strange game, with an even stranger result.

Churchill Brothers halted Minerva Punjab FC's superb run in the I-League with a 2-1 victory at the Tilak Maidan in Vasco on Friday. This was only Minerva's second loss in the I-League but still keeps them at the top of the table with a six-point advantage over East Bengal. With six matches left to be played, including five at home, Minerva are still the overwhelming favourites to win what will be an unlikely of titles but the loss against Churchill should set the alarm bell ringing.

### I-LEAGUE MATCH VS CHURCHILL

Minerva were found wanting in the opening 45 minutes when Churchill scored twice. The first was a penalty from the boots of Koffi Mechac and the second a fluke from Wayne Vaz that Nepal goalkeeper Kiran Limbu failed to read. Minerva, probably inspired by some strong words from their owner Ranjit Bajaj - also doubling up as manager, who lined up water bottles for the players to drink from the dugout - Minerva pulled a goal back through Kasmir Aidara in the 57th minute, but star man Chencho Gyeltshen, also known as CG7 for his obsession with Cristiano Ronaldo, missed a penalty minutes later.

The miss proved costly for Minerva in the end. Churchill stuck to their task and did not offer their rivals a second chance. They themselves should have killed the game with two late counter attacks but, like most part of this campaign, they lacked sharpness upfront.

The result will, of course, surprise many. Churchill are fighting to save the drop and came into this game with a home loss against Neroca FC. Minerva are the high-flyers whose title hopes



**KOFFI BREAK:** Churchill Brothers forward Koffi Mechac celebrates his goal in Vasco

were getting clearer with every game. Three points should have been a formality but Churchill proved they were as good, if not better, than anyone else in the competition, never mind their five losses in a row at the start.

Minerva rarely impressed. From giving away the ball cheaply at the start to conceding an unwanted penalty, the visitors never played like champions in waiting. To be fair, they should have had an early penalty but, at least initially, they were nervy and probably a bit overconfident too. Churchill punished them by taking their chances. Koffi won a penalty and converted it himself in the 17th minute when Sukhdev Singh needlessly brought him down.

If that didn't wake them up, the goal at the stroke of half-time surely did. Right-back Wayne tried floating a ball inside the box and it somehow sailed past the stranded goalkeeper into the top corner of the net. Churchill, in fact, had the better chances when their rivals pushed more men forward but in the end, they got what they wanted from this strange game with a stranger result. Not that Churchill would mind.

# Lajong & Bagan aim for top 4

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**Shillong:** After three matches on the road, Shillong Lajong are back home as they look to make the final push for a top-four finish. With just five more matches left for them in the season, Lajong are ready to take on Mohun Bagan, who are just a rung above them at fourth spot, in an interesting I-League encounter at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Saturday.

The first leg of the fixture had ended in a 1-1 draw in Kolkata with Samuel Lamunpuia's penalty cancelling Dipanda Dicka's early strike and Abe King-

sley being shown a red card. But with the season nearing its business end, both teams feel the league is still wide open for achieving their tar-

### I-LEAGUE

gets. Taking it "one match at a time" and "step by step" were identical phrases used by Lajong assistant coach Alyson Kharsyntiew and Bagan gaffer Shankarlal Chakraborty at the pre-match press conference on Friday.

Both teams have amassed 17 points so far with Bagan playing two matches less than the hosts but with superior goal difference. As acknowledged

by Chakraborty, the Kolkata giants will be up against two adversaries - Lajong and the cold - in a rare evening kickoff (5:30 pm) with temperatures in the hill city dropping regularly to less than ten degrees after sunset. "It is not the kind of temperature we get in Kolkata," Chakraborty remarked.

If weather poses a hurdle for the visitors, a rejuvenated Bagan also have a few advantages. In a season that has been shaped by a slew of injury woes, Bagan have a fully fit squad at their disposal.

This will mean the return of Dipanda Dicka, who played just 33 minutes in their draw against Aizawl.

# CCFC look to get out of drop-zone

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Chennai:** Chennai City FC (CCFC) showed signs of resurgence when they defeated Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan in their own backyard. But since then the Soosairaj side is yet to win another game and is currently languishing at the bottom of the table. But CCFC are not ready to give up yet and are keen to go all out in search of their first win at home when they face Aizawl FC in their I-League match at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Coimbatore on Saturday. With the relegation sword hanging and Churchill Brothers gaining momentum, it's imperative that CCFC, who have 10 points from 12 games, win this one to give themselves some breathing space.

"We had a lot of good chances (in the last game) but we didn't convert," said coach V Soundararajan. "The fear of relegation is there and so it's a must-win situation for us. Even a draw won't do at this stage."



**KEY MAN:** Jean Micheal Joachim (left) will look to return among goals

they play CCFC. "It is true that we are a bit tired. We have been travelling a lot in the last two weeks but I have always told my boys that we need to focus only on winning," Meneses said on Thursday.

The last meeting between these two sides ended 2-0 in favour of Aizawl and Meneses is extremely confident ahead of this one. "Our confidence levels are always the same. We try to win three points in every game. We fight against every team and we have done that even in the AFC Champions League in the last match. But we know what Chennai are capable of and so we are not taking this lightly," the Portuguese coach added.

CCFC's top scorer Jean Micheal Joachim is going through a dry spell and needs to quickly get back to his scoring ways. The hosts will be without the services of Henry Tesong (who saw a red card in the last match) and Pradeep Mohanraj who is yet to recover from the injury he picked up against Arrows.

# Anu, Pooja complete golden double; Nisar shows mettle

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Delhi sprinter **Nisar Ahmed** on Friday equalled his own meet record after recording a sub-11 timing to clinch the gold medal in the 100m dash at the Khe-10 India School Games (KISG) here.

On the third day of the inaugural edition of the meet, Nisar, son of a rickshaw puller, rewrote the

### KHELO INDIA

under-16 national record in the 100m sprint with an excellent timing of 10.76s, putting his opponents in the shade. This was Nisar's fourth sub-11 timing since his gold medal-effort of 11s at the Delhi state meet last September. Earlier, he had run 10.76s at the School Nationals in Bhopal and 10.85s at the 33rd National Junior Athletics Championships in Vijayawada.



Nisar, who lives in a 10x10 feet room at the Bada Bagh slum in Azadpur area, had to run the 100m race twice within a span of 20 minutes at the KISG following a false start by other competitors. Nisar was so focused on the race that he did not hear the recall whistle by the referee and went all out to complete the run in 10.77s. The race was then pushed by 20 minutes to allow athletes time to recover.

Nisar would soon be seen training at the famous Racers Track Club in Kingston, Jamaica, home to track legend Usain Bolt and his coach Glen Mills. Nisar, who will be skipping 200m event, had to postpone his Jamaica trip in order to compete at the KISG and will now fly out of the country on Saturday.

In the other track and field

events of the day, Uttarakhand's Anu Kumar continued his dominant run, clocking a personal best of 1:52.08s to add the 800m gold to the 1500m he had won on the opening day of the competitions.

Another athlete to complete a golden double was Haryana's Pooja, who added the discus throw gold to the shot put medal she had won earlier.

In the shooting discipline, Chandigarh's Zeena Khitta captured the gold in the girls' 10m air rifle event with a comfortable lead of 1.9 points over his rivals, silver medallist Nandita Sul from and Indore's Yana Rathore, who grabbed the bronze. In the boys' 10m air rifle, Shahu Mane emerged victorious, followed by Rithik Ramesh and Parth Makhiya. In hockey, Punjab drubbed Rajasthan 10-1, while Chandigarh battled out past Uttar Pradesh 2-1 in the boys' competition.

# Keshavan, Jagdish for Winter Games

**New Delhi:** Luger Shiva Keshavan and cross country skier Jagdish Singh will represent India in the PyeongChang Winter Olympics which begins on February 9.

The 36-year-old Keshavan, the country's best known Winter Olympian, will be taking part in his sixth Games since his debut at Nagano in Japan in 1998. He represented the country in the 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014 Winter Olympics.

Meanwhile, Jagdish Singh will be representing India in his first ever Winter Olympics at PyeongChang, South Korea.

While Keshavan was India's only representative at the 1998 and 2002 Winter Olympics, he was joined by the likes of Neha Ahuja and Hira Lal (alpine skiing), and Bahadur Gupta (cross-country skiing) at the 2006 Games in Turin, Italy. In the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, India had three members in Keshavan, Jamyang Namgial (alpine skiing) and Tashi Lundup (cross-country skiing).

In the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, India had three representatives in Keshavan, Himanshu Thakur (alpine skiing), Nadeem Iqbal (cross-country skiing). The trio had to walk as 'Independent Athletes' behind the International Olympic Committee flag during the opening ceremony as the Indian Olympic Association was under suspension at that time. **PI**

# WADA concerned after CAS overturns bans

**Montreal:** The World Anti-Doping Agency has expressed its "serious concern" over the decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport to overturn Olympic life bans on 28 Russians accused of doping.

"WADA understands that this decision will cause dismay and frustration among athletes," the organisation said in a statement on Thursday. "The Agency supports the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) intention to analyse these decisions very carefully and consider all options, including an appeal to the Swiss Federal Tribunal."

The CAS decision, which

## Russia wants to send 33 athletes to Paralympics

**Moscow:** Russia said yesterday it wants 33 athletes to go to the Paralympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang where they will compete under a neutral flag as the country remains suspended following revelations of state-sponsored doping.

The Russian Paralympic Committee (RPC) statement said that the list submitted to the international body features a 79-strong delegation which includes 33 athletes and seven

guides for the visually impaired competitors.

They will compete in five sports at the March 9-18 Paralympics under the Neutral Paralympic Athlete (NPA) banner. Russia was suspended by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) in August 2016 following revelations of widespread state-sponsored doping uncovered in a report by Richard McLaren on behalf of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). But athletes are allowed to take part in South Korea as neutrals.

was hailed by Moscow, was a major embarrassment for the IOC just days away from the start of the Winter Games in Pyeongchang.

CAS ruled that the there was "insufficient" evidence

that the athletes had benefited from a system of state-sponsored doping at the 2014 Winter Games, hosted by Russia. The cleared 28, which includes Sochi cross-country gold medallist Alexander Leg-

kov, are now eligible to compete in the Pyeongchang Olympics, but their participation is by no means certain. In addition to clearing the 28, CAS also lifted the life bans of another 11 Russians but

barred them from competing at Pyeongchang.

"WADA notes with serious concern the decisions by CAS to uphold the appeals of 28 Russian athletes while also essentially rejecting the appeals of 11 others against suspensions issued by the IOC for anti-doping rule violations when all 39 athletes were part of Russia's systemic doping program," added the WADA statement.

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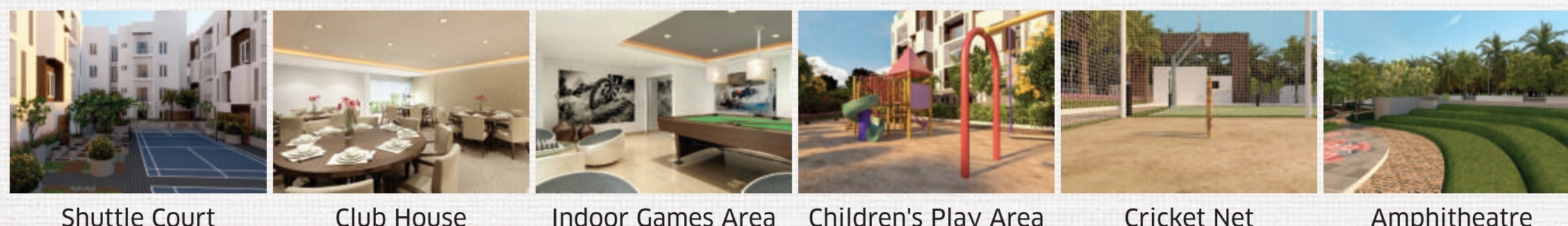


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